

PIS&IS

Demystifying Jungian Psychology



RAFAEL KRÜGER

PISTIS

Demystifying Jungian Psychology

Rafael Krüger

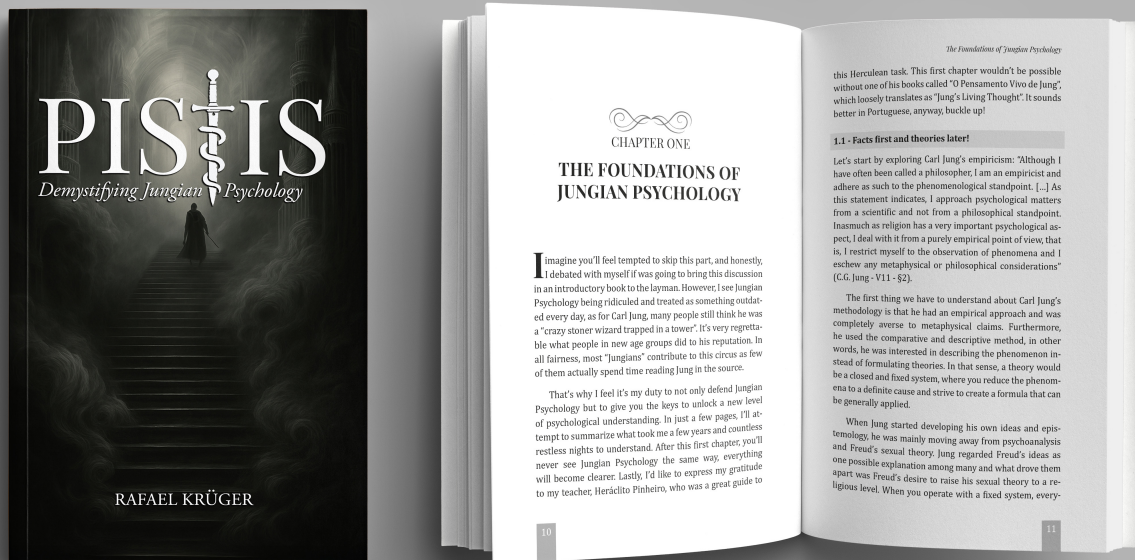
Did someone send you this book?

Don't forget to sign up to the [Audacity Newsletter](#) to receive my best articles.

You can also order a paperback or kindle copy from Amazon.

This is the best way to support my work, also the book looks amazing :)

[Order your copy here](#)



Copyright © 2025 by Rafael Krüger. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

www.rafaelkruger.com

CÂMARA BRASILEIRA DO LIVRO CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA

Krüger, Rafael
Pistis: demystifying jungian psychology /
Rafael Krüger. - 1st Edition - Nova Petrópolis, RS:
Author's Edition, 2025.

Bibliography
ISBN n° 978-65-01-39100-7

1. Jung, Carl Gustav, 1875-1961 - Critique and Interpretation
2. Jung, Carl Gustav, 1875-1961 - Psychology
3. Analytical Psychology
4. Jungian Psychology I. Title.

25-262344

CDD - 150.1954

Eliane de Freitas Leite - CRB 8/8415

*To my wife who sparked many insightful conversations that
contributed to giving life to this book.*

The Audacity To Carve Your Own Path	9
1 - The Foundations of Jungian Psychology	12
1.1 - Facts first and theories later!	12
1.2 - Learned Nominalism	14
1.3 - Psychic Reality	16
1.4 - Compilation	18
2 - The Psychodynamics of Shadow Integration	22
2.1 - Carl Jung's Model of The Psyche	22
2.2 - Complexes	24
2.3 - Projection Unveiled	27
2.4 - The Golden Shadow	29
3 - The Puer and Puella Aeternus	32
3.1 - Overcoming The Mother and Father Complex	32
3.2 - The Provisional Life	39
3.3 - Overcoming Love Addiction	42
3.4 - Facing God's Dark Side	48
3.5 - Integrating The Shadow of The Puer Aeternus	51
3.6 - The Prevailing Cure For The Puer Aeternus	57
3.7 - The Invaluable Mission of The Puer Aeternus	63
4 - Psychological Types Unraveled	66
4.1 - Introversion and Extroversion	67
4.2 - The Four Functions	69
4.3 - The Inferior Function	72
5. Archetypes	74
5.1 - The Image of Instincts	74

5.2 - Archetypal Images	76
5.3 - Religious Experiences	76
6 - Eros and Logos - The Hierosgamos	80
6.1 - Animus and Anima	83
6.2 - The Persona Compensation	84
6.3 - The Animus and Anima Function	86
7. Animus - The Archetype of Meaning	88
7.1 - Animus Identification	89
7.2 - Animus Integration	91
8. Anima - The Archetype of Life	94
8.1 - Anima Integration	96
9 - The Art of Dream Interpretation	99
9.1 - The Prospective Nature of the Psyche	99
9.2 - The Mechanics of Dream Interpretation	101
9.3 - The Psychodynamics of Dream Compensation	104
9.4 - General Guidelines	106
10 - Active Imagination Deciphered	108
10.1 - The Mirrored World	108
10.2 - When is Active Imagination advised?	110
10.3 - The Procedure – A step-by-step approach	111
11 - The Individuation Journey	115
11.1 - The Symbol Formation Process	117
12 - How To Read Carl Jung's Collected Works	120
12.1 - Antinomies	120
12.2 - Introductory Reading Guide	122

12.3 - Intermediate Reading Guide	125
13 - The Hidden Message of Carl Jung's Red Book (Bonus Chapter)	127
About The Author and Resources	132

The Audacity To Carve Your Own Path

Honestly, I never thought I'd write anything in my life, let alone an introduction to Jungian Psychology. But I learned that new paths emerge when we allow ourselves to question our assumptions about life and our true capabilities. The writings of Carl Jung had a profound impact on my life as they were able to translate many of my experiences that I couldn't even begin to describe. When I first started reading, I'd spend four to six hours every day trying to unravel the mysteries of the *psyche*. This lasted for a whole year and after this initial period, I'd still dedicate about two hours to studying almost daily. Even at this pace, it took me over three years to gather the necessary material for this book.

Concomitantly, I started sharing my findings and my experience as a therapist on a subreddit called r/Jung, today I'm part of the moderation team. During this period, I learned a lot from every response I received to my articles. I was able to catalog the most common doubts, difficulties, and the most relevant topics. What prompted me to write this book was witnessing many discussions without any real foundation and people struggling because they wanted to know more but didn't have the right guidance. I was once in this position and that's why I feel a sense of duty to fill this gap.

This book is for those insatiable souls, for those who have fire in their eyes and are willing to do what it takes to realize their authentic paths. This work is the result of me facing my fears and following my *pistis*. That said, I want to be clear that this book wasn't made to reach academics, but the layman who's passionate about psychology and a Jung enthusiast. You'll notice that I allow myself to be more poetic at times and use the terms a bit more loosely. I intend to present you with something real and perhaps, it can help you as much as it helped me.

That's why I want to begin exploring what *pistis* means to me. Jung says that "[...] A man should know himself and his own peculiarities and have the courage to stand by them. Only when a man lives in his own way is he responsible and capable of action—otherwise he is just a hanger-on or follower-on with no proper personality" (C. G. Jung – V16 – §42). I must confess that these words pierced through my soul and translated something that I've felt in some capacity my whole life, but have only been truly conscious of for the three years.

As humans we crave answers, we don't want to make mistakes and have the tendency to look for systems, formulas, recipes, shortcuts, and a step-by-step guide to life. That's exactly what a religion, a political movement, or a philosophical system can provide. Furthermore, if you pair that with a sense of belonging you have the perfect recipe for perpetuating immature adults, where fanaticism serves as a compensation for inner doubts, and by "converting" more people to your movement, these same gnawing can doubts cease for a while.

In that sense, the responsibility for one's life is projected onto a "guru". As Jung puts it, "The fact that the conventions always flourish in one form or another only proves that the vast majority of mankind do not choose their own way, but convention, and consequently develop not themselves but a method and a collective mode of life at the cost of their own wholeness" (C. G. Jung – V17 – §296). But by engaging with something ready-made and making this your truth instead of finding your own answers, you're disowning the most important part of your *soul* and running away from psychological maturity.

The way of individuation is finding your particular answers to life. It means carving your own path and slaying your own dragon, instead of taking pride in others' deeds. But don't get me wrong here, I'm not anti-religion or philosophy, we can certainly find inspiration from ancient traditions and they can be a powerful guide in the quest for objective truth. However, the actual process of building our *cosmovision* (*weltanschauung*) has to be done individually and is very lengthy and laborious. It's based on what Jung calls *moral confrontation*.

A highly important point here is to always remember that we live in a paradox between accommodating internal and external demands. In other words, we have to find a way of expressing our individuality in the external world, without simply disregarding or forfeiting it. On the contrary, this would be just an angry teenager rebellion or empty individuality as Jung points out. Individuation requires a fine balance between the adaptation of the *persona* and the demands of the *individuation process*.

However, listening to your inner voice and achieving freedom has a price. You have to cultivate the courage to stand by what you believe in and have the audacity to go your own way. Accepting full responsibility is imperative. As you truly engage in finding your answers, for example, entertaining the problem of good and evil, you start noticing something emerging from the

depths of your *soul*. At first, it's something amorphous in its embryonic stages. But the more you sustain the paradoxes, the more solid your convictions become.

They emerge as a new synthesis, binding the extremes into new connections at a higher level until you tap into a truth that can sustain you through the most difficult periods of your life. Your own internal law, your *pistis*. A solid inner foundation that inspires you, brings peace, and at the same time fuels you with creative power. You're no longer the effect, now you're the protagonist co-creating your destiny at the service of the *Self*.

"I was driven to ask myself in all seriousness: "What is the myth you are living?" I found no answer to this question and had to admit that I was not living with a myth, or even in a myth, but rather in an uncertain cloud of theoretical possibilities which I was beginning to regard with increasing distrust. I did not know that I was living a myth, and even if I had known it, I would not have known what sort of myth was ordering my life without my knowledge. So, in the most natural way, I took it upon myself to get to know "my" myth, and I regarded this as the task of tasks" (C. G. Jung – V5, p. 300).

Do you dare?

1 - The Foundations of Jungian Psychology

I imagine you'll feel tempted to skip this part, and honestly, I debated with myself if was going to bring this discussion in an introductory book to the layman. However, I see Jungian Psychology being ridiculed and treated as something outdated every day, as for Carl Jung, many people still think he was a "crazy stoner wizard trapped in a tower". It's very regrettable what people in new age groups did to his reputation. In all fairness, most "Jungians" contribute to this circus as few of them actually spend time reading Jung in the source.

That's why I feel it's my duty to not only defend Jungian Psychology but to give you the keys to unlock a new level of psychological understanding. In just a few pages, I'll attempt to summarize what took me a few years and countless restless nights to understand. After this first chapter, you'll never see Jungian Psychology the same way, everything will become clearer. Lastly, I'd like to express my gratitude to my teacher, Heráclito Pinheiro, who was a great guide to this Herculean task. This first chapter wouldn't be possible without one of his books called "O Pensamento Vivo de Jung", which loosely translates as "Jung's Living Thought". It sounds better in Portuguese, anyway, buckle up!

1.1 - Facts first and theories later!

Let's start by exploring Carl Jung's empiricism: "Although I have often been called a philosopher, I am an empiricist and adhere as such to the phenomenological standpoint. [...] As this statement indicates, I approach psychological matters from a scientific and not from a philosophical standpoint. Inasmuch as religion has a very important psychological aspect, I deal with it from a purely empirical point of view, that is, I restrict myself to the observation of phenomena and I eschew any metaphysical or philosophical considerations" (C.G. Jung - V11 - §2).

The first thing we have to understand about Carl Jung's methodology is that he had an empirical approach and was completely averse to metaphysical claims. Furthermore, he used the comparative and descriptive method, in other words, he was interested in describing the phenomenon instead of formulating theories. In that sense, a theory would be a closed and fixed system, where you reduce the phenomena to a definite cause and strive to create a formula that can be generally applied.

When Jung started developing his own ideas and epistemology, he was mainly moving away from psychoanalysis and Freud's sexual theory. Jung regarded Freud's ideas as one possible explanation among many and what drove them apart was Freud's desire to raise his sexual theory to a religious level. When you operate with a fixed system, everything will be filtered through these lenses, consequently, this will always give you the same answers and promote a reductionistic attitude that strives to fit everything in a tiny box.

A grotesque example would be a few somatic approaches that claim that if you have pain in the right side of your body, you have problems with your father and the masculine, but if the pain is in the left side of your body, you have problems with your mother and the feminine. We also have theories that want to explain someone's personality through their body shape and even blood type. Of course, this sounds sketchy, but this is what happens when you try to create a formula, it's something that appears to give proper answers, but in reality, it doesn't. Furthermore, a generally valid formula will always disregard individuality, that's why Jung was interested in describing the nature of psychological processes, rather than formulating a fixed theory.

With his epistemology, Carl Jung also criticized positivism and the statistical method, without completely abandoning it, as he was always striving to conciliate the paradox between the collective and the individual truth. To do so, Jung proposed the use of the dialectical method in the therapeutic setting. In his eyes, this is the only method that can fully respect individuality, as the dialectic doesn't work with preconceived notions and fixed rules, and seeks to unravel the internal logic within the phenomena, also considering the peculiarities of the individual context. Finally, the dialectic is a method that strives to unite opposing tendencies in the *psyche* and produce a new synthesis, which Jung calls the *symbol formation process*, the core of Jungian Psychology. But don't worry about this now, there's a whole chapter dedicated to it.

The Psychophysical and Personal Equations

Carl Jung also disregards the notion of a passive and "pure observation" of the phenomena postulated by classic empiricism. Being influenced by Kant, Jung believes that the subject is active in the process of knowing and that our pre-dispositions influence our interpretation of reality. Furthermore, Jung differs from the monist and physicalist approach that considers the *psyche* a mere fruit of brain activity. Being a dualist, he considers an interdependence between *psyche* and

body, giving each one their own dignity. In that sense, Jung's empiricism was founded on a *psychophysical equation* and a *personal equation*.

Classic empiricism postulates that humans are a *tabula rasa* to be marked by experience and that all knowledge is mediated by the five senses. However, in *Psychological Types* Jung explains that consciousness has four functions, namely *thinking*, *feeling*, *sensation*, and *intuition*. The *sensation function* is the one linked with sensory experience, however, perception isn't limited by it, we still have *intuition*, which is a form of perception via the unconscious.

Thus, *intuition* perceives all the elements that come from the unconscious which consciousness perceives as *psychic images*. Therefore, Jung considers perception the sum of *sensation* and *intuition*, which constitutes the *psychophysical equation*. It's important to realize that these *psychic images* aren't invented by the conscious mind, rather they spontaneously appear independent of conscious will, which leads Jung to consider the existence of an objective psyche*,* i.e., which can't be reduced to mere subjectivity, namely the impersonal or collective unconscious.

The second layer of Carl Jung's empiricism is the *personal equation*, as he considers the subject active in the process of knowing and severely doubts the possibility of "pure observation". Jung indicates that our subjectivity already interferes in the very process of observation, as he puts it, *one sees what one can best see oneself*. This process will become clearer when we cover the concept of *conscious attitude* and the *psychological types*, which will be done in the second and fourth chapters respectively.

1.2 - Learned Nominalism

In the second part of our exploration, we have to cover something that's absolutely a game changer. In *Psychological Types*, Carl Jung referred to himself as a *learned nominalist*, which is neither a realist nor nominalist attitude, but rather something in between. Under this light, Jung's work consisted in cataloging his findings, once he realized there were patterns, he'd group and label them, like the *shadow* or the *animus* and *anima*. However, it's imperative to understand that the name itself doesn't explain *what the thing is*, as this would be a metaphysical statement, these labels are simply a map to help us better navigate the nature of the phenomenon. That's why you'll never see Jung stating *what the shadow is*, rather, he'll describe its qualities and how it generally behaves.

In Jung's words, "In view of the enormous complexity of psychic phenomena, a purely phenomenological point of view is, and will be for a long time, the only possible one and the only one with any prospect of success. "Whence" things come and "what" they are, these, particularly in the field of psychology, are questions which are apt to call forth untimely attempts at explanation. Such speculations are moreover based far more on unconscious philosophical premises than on the nature of the phenomena themselves. Psychic phenomena occasioned by unconscious processes are so rich and so multifarious that I prefer to *describe* my findings and observations and, where possible, to classify them—that is, to arrange them under certain definite types" (C.G. Jung - V9 - §308).

Apart from embracing many of Kant's views, Jung was also heavily influenced by William James and his pragmatic approach to psychology, from which he adopted the notion of *cash-value* and *conceptual short-cuts*. The first one refers to how our beliefs shape our immediate experience in the world. For instance, if I believe I can fly, one of the immediate impacts in my life is that I might actually try to do it by jumping off a cliff. It's interesting to realize that these beliefs may or may not be rooted in objective reality, raising the importance of our individual interpretations and how this impacts the quality of our experience.

Moreover Jung doesn't consider truth something static and universally valid, instead, he relates to truth in a dynamic and processual way. Truth appears in the process of validating an idea. In *Two Essays On Analytical Psychology*, Jung analyzes one particular case through two opposing points of view, Freud's sexual theory and Adler's will to power. It's incredibly interesting to see how different the conclusions are when you adopt each one of these lenses, as the treatment will be the exact opposite.

As you might have guessed, Carl Jung concludes by saying that both points of view are partially valid and what will determine its applicability is the individual context. May I add, from my experience as a therapist, it's important to work with opposing truths at all times, as there's a variability not only in the individuals but also in their own experiences, which requires different lenses for different situations, and more often than not, a combination of opposing perspectives. In that sense, truth is an instrument and not an end in itself. Once again, we can see why different from Freud and Adler, Jung didn't have a theory.

The second notion, *conceptual short-cuts*, is related to the applicability of Carl Jung's concepts, which he also referred to as *empirical concepts* or *experimental concepts*. Rather than saying *what the thing is*, he wants to give us a map to navigate the *psyche*. In other words, when you can name a certain pattern, like a *complex*, it gives you an orientation on how to treat it, how the phenomenon usually behaves, what to expect, and what is the best course of action. That's why just knowing a fancy name means nothing, it's just substituting the reality of the phenomena with words.

For instance, I see this lazy interpretation all the time, when a man dreams with a woman, people immediately say "Oh wow, you just dreamed with your *anima*". Knowing the name of something gives you the illusion that you understood it, but in reality, this is meaningless and it's not an interpretation. Even though it might be an *anima* figure, you have no idea what it means for the dreamer, why it appeared, or how to proceed. Knowing the concepts is just the first step, as they're tools that point in the right direction so our exploration can begin.

1.3 - Psychic Reality

Now, we're ready to explore Carl Jung's most misunderstood idea, the notion of *psychic reality* and further our understanding of his attitude toward metaphysics. In Jung's words, "It is really my purpose to push aside, without mercy, the metaphysical claims of all esoteric teaching [...] To understand metaphysically is impossible; it can only be done psychologically I therefore strip things of their metaphysical wrappings in order to make them objects of psychology" (C. G. Jung - The Secret of The Golden Flower – p. 129).

In *Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, Carl Jung explains that our experience happens in between two realms, the objective and concrete reality mediated by the senses and the subjective and spiritual reality of the *soul*. However, Jung proposes that regardless of these two opposing realms, every experience we have is mediated by *psychic images*. To Jung, "The only form of existence of which we have immediate knowledge is psychic. We might well say, on the contrary, that physical existence is a mere inference, since we know of matter only in so far as we perceive psychic images mediated by the senses" (C. G. Jung - V11 – §16).

Furthermore, Jung appeals to Kant saying that we can't ever know *what a thing is*. Even if we're discussing objective experiences mediated by the senses, like witnessing a fire, the most we can do is explain its chemical reactions. But that's it, no one can know *what* fire is in itself, or its "ultimate essence", as this would also be a metaphysical statement.

In Jung's words, "The fact that I restrict myself to what can be psychically experienced, and repudiate the metaphysical, does not mean, as anyone with insight can understand, a gesture of scepticism or agnosticism pointed against faith or trust in higher powers, but what I intend to say is approximately the same thing Kant meant when he called "das Ding an sich" (the thing in itself), a "purely negative, borderline concept". Every statement about the transcendental ought to be avoided because it is invariably a laughable presumption on the part of the human mind, unconscious of its limitations" (C. G. Jung - The Secret of The Golden Flower – p. 135).

Before these limitations, through an empirical and pragmatic approach, Jung proposes the psychological standpoint in hopes of ending the discussion between *psyche* and matter, and uniting this paradox. Carl Jung states, "I would only like to unite these extreme opposites by an *esse in anima*, which is the psychological standpoint. We live immediately only in the world of images" (C. G. Jung - V8 – §624).

To clarify this statement, I've separated an important excerpt from *Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, "The conflict between the physical and the spiritual aspects only shows that psychic life is in the last analysis an incomprehensible "something." Without a doubt it is our only immediate experience. All that I experience is psychic. Even physical pain is a psychic image which I experience; my sense-impressions—for all that they force upon me a world of impenetrable objects occupying space—are psychic images, and these alone constitute my immediate experience, for they alone are the immediate objects of my consciousness. My own psyche even transforms and falsifies reality, and it does this to such a degree that I must resort to artificial means to determine what things are like apart from myself. Then I discover that a sound is a vibration of air of such and such a frequency, or that a colour is a wave of light of such and such a length. We are in truth so wrapped about by psychic images that we cannot penetrate at all to the essence of things external to ourselves. All our knowledge consists of the stuff of the psyche which, because it alone is immediate, is superlatively real. Here, then, is a reality to which the psychologist can appeal—namely, psychic reality" (C. G. Jung - V8 - §680).

"If we try to penetrate more deeply into the meaning of this concept, it seems to us that certain psychic contents or images are derived from a "material" environment to which our bodies belong, while others, which are in no way less real, seem to come from a "spiritual" source which appears to be very different from the physical environment. Whether I picture to myself the car I wish to buy or try to imagine the state in which the soul of my dead father now is—whether it is an external fact or a thought that concerns me—both happenings are psychic reality. The only difference is that one psychic happening refers to the physical world, and the other to the spiritual world. If I shift my concept of reality on to the plane of the psyche—where alone it is valid—this puts an end to the conflict between mind and matter, spirit and nature, as contradictory explanatory principles. Each becomes a mere designation for the particular source of the psychic contents that crowd into my field of consciousness" (C. G. Jung - V8 - §681).

As we can see, no metaphysical question has a definite answer, as we're structurally incapable of knowing these realities for themselves. In that sense, Carl Jung adopts a Kantian agnostic attitude, and rejects any pretensions to metaphysics, making statements exclusively in the psychological field. Therefore, when Jung speaks of God, he is not speaking of a really existent metaphysical being, but of the *psychic image* of what constitutes the greatest amount of libido, *the highest value operative in a human soul*, the *imago Dei*.

Even if this entity exists, he would only be perceived psychologically, as a *psychic image*, we would never see him as he really is outside of us, only as an inner manifestation in our *psyche*. As Jung says, "There are men "whose God is the belly" (Phil. 3 : 19), and others for whom God is money, science, power, sex, etc." (C. G. Jung - V6 - §67). Lastly, Jung summarizes this notion with the elegant and pragmatic definition that "Everything that *works*, that *affects* is real".

1.4 - Compilation

Lastly, since many people have a hard time believing me and/or have prejudices, I want you to read these excerpts from the man himself. I'll leave a few extra quotes from one of the most important letters Jung ever wrote and a final interesting passage. In the letter, Jung explains his empirical approach to Martin Buber, as he was being accused of being Gnostic and a mystic. You can find the full letter in *Symbolic Life* under the title "A Reply to Martin Buber".

Carl Jung is simply a psychiatrist:

“Now when opinions about the same subject differ so widely, there is in my view ground for the suspicion that none of them is correct, and that there has been a misunderstanding. Why is so much attention devoted to the question of whether I am a Gnostic or an agnostic? Why is it not simply stated that I am a psychiatrist whose prime concern is to record and interpret his empirical material? I try to investigate facts and make them more generally comprehensible. My critics have no right to slur over this in order to attack individual statements taken out of context” (C.G. Jung - V18 - §1500).

Facts first and theories later!

“I would like to point out to my critic that I have in my time been regarded not only as a Gnostic and its opposite, but also as a theist and an atheist, a mystic and a materialist. In this concert of contending opinions I do not wish to lay too much stress on what I consider myself to be, but will quote a judgment from a leading article in the *British Medical Journal* (9 February 1952), a source that would seem to be above suspicion. “Facts first and theories later is the keynote of Jung’s work. He is an empiricist first and last.” This view meets with my approval” (C.G. Jung - V18 - §1502).

Carl Jung on his empirical approach:

“Buber is mistaken in thinking that I start with a “fundamentally Gnostic viewpoint” and then proceed to “elaborate” metaphysical assertions. One should not misconstrue the findings of empiricism as philosophical premises, for they are not obtained by deduction but from clinical and factual material” (C.G. Jung - V18 - §1510).

Carl Jung explains why he doesn’t fit any system:

“It is inevitable that the adherents of traditional religious systems should find my formulations hard to understand. A Gnostic would not be at all pleased with me, but would reproach me for having no cosmogony and for the cluelessness of my gnosis in regard to the happenings in the Pleroma. A Buddhist would complain that I was deluded by Maya, and a Taoist that I was too complicated. As

for an orthodox Christian, he can hardly do otherwise than deplore the nonchalance and lack of respect with which I navigate through the empyrean of dogmatic ideas. I must, however, once more beg my unmerciful critics to remember that I start from *facts* for which I seek an interpretation” (C.G. Jung - V18 - §1513).

Lastly, Carl Jung on theosophy:

"But there is still another form of negative thinking, which at first glance might not be recognized as such, and that is theosophical thinking, which today is rapidly spreading in all parts of the world, presumably in reaction to the materialism of the recent past. Theosophical thinking has an air that is not in the least reductive, since it exalts everything to a transcendental and world-embracing idea. A dream, for instance, is no longer just a dream, but an experience “on another plane.” The hitherto inexplicable fact of telepathy is very simply explained as “vibrations” passing from one person to another. An ordinary nervous complaint is explained by the fact that something has collided with the “astral body.” Certain ethnological peculiarities of the dwellers on the Atlantic seaboard are easily accounted for by the submergence of Atlantis, and so on. We have only to open a theosophical book to be overwhelmed by the realization that everything is already explained, and that “spiritual science” has left no enigmas unsolved. But, at bottom, this kind of thinking is just as negative as materialistic thinking. When the latter regards psychology as chemical changes in the ganglia or as the extrusion and retraction of cell-pseudopodia or as an internal secretion, this is just as much a superstition as theosophy. The only difference is that materialism reduces everything to physiology, whereas theosophy reduces everything to Indian metaphysics. When a dream is traced back to an overloaded stomach, this is no explanation of the dream, and when we explain telepathy as vibrations we have said just as little. For what are “vibrations”? Not only are both methods of explanation futile, they are actually destructive, because by diverting interest away from the main issue, in one case to the stomach and in the other to imaginary vibrations, they hamper any serious investigation of the problem by a bogus explanation. Either kind of thinking is sterile and sterilizing. Its negative quality is due to the fact that it is so indescribably cheap, impoverished, and lacking in creative energy. It is a thinking taken in tow by other functions” (C.G. Jung - V6 - §594).

After this stack of undeniable truth, I hope that the nonsense can finally end. You’re welcome to have your own beliefs about life as I have mine, and I respect that. However, I hope that you understand that we can’t butcher Jung’s work to justify our personal preferences. In conclusion,

Jung divides his work into two categories, *Complex Psychology* which refers to his scientific approach and *Analytical Psychology* which refers to his methodology on the therapeutic setting, both having an empirical foundation.

This discussion will be amplified in the last chapter. Lastly, If you're an epistemology nerd and want to know more, I strongly recommend reading the whole of *Psychological Types* and *Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*. That said, now that we have the right lenses, we're finally ready to dive deep into Carl Jung's work.

2 - The Psychodynamics of Shadow Integration

One of the main topics that get people interested in Carl Jung is the notion of *shadow integration*, for some unknown reason it was popularized by the term *shadow work*, even though Jung never used it a single time. Honestly, I'm not a fan of this term since it's been associated with a lot of scammy new-age nonsense that continuously gives Jungian Psychology a terrible reputation. But at this point, using it helps my videos and articles be more discoverable, so I guess it's a necessary evil. However, if you want to do research for yourself, you'll find the terms *shadow assimilation* or *shadow integration* in Carl Jung's collected works.

Also, you'll often hear people referring to “parts” or “aspects” of the personality, but no one talks about *complexes*. However, this idea is so central to Jungian Psychology that as we've seen Jung himself refers to his work as *Complex Psychology*. Lastly, the Shadow holds the key to uncovering our hidden talents, being more creative, building confidence, creating healthy relationships, and achieving meaning and purpose, making it one of the most important elements in Jungian Psychology. Let's begin with our exploration.

2.1 - Carl Jung's Model of The Psyche

To start, we have to explore the most important concept, yet forgotten, in Jungian Psychology: *conscious attitude*. This is basically how a person is wired, it's a sum of their belief system, core values, individual pre-dispositions, their typology, and an Eros or Logos orientation. In summary, *conscious attitude* is someone's *modus operandi*. It's every psychological component used to filter, interpret, and react to reality. Using a fancy term, your *cosmovision*.

In Jung's words, “Attitude is a readiness of the psyche to act or react in a certain way [...] The state of readiness, which I conceive attitude to be, consists in the presence of a certain subjective constellation, a definite combination of psychic factors or contents, which will either determine action in this or that definite direction, or react to an external stimulus in a definite (predetermined) way” (C. G. Jung - V6 – §687).

This may sound complex, but to simplify, think about your favorite character from a movie or TV show. Now, try to describe his values, beliefs, and how he tends to act in different situations.

If you can spot certain patterns, you're close to evaluating someone's *conscious attitude*, and the *shadow integration* process will require that you study your own.

The *conscious attitude* acts by **selecting – directing – and excluding**, and the relationship between conscious and unconscious is compensatory and complementary. In that sense, everything that is incompatible with the *conscious attitude* and its values will be relegated to the unconscious. For instance, if you're someone extremely oriented by logic, invariably, feelings and emotions won't be able to come to the surface, and vice-versa. In summary, everything that our conscious mind judges as bad, negative, or inferior, will form our *shadow*.

That's why contrary to popular belief, the *shadow* isn't made of only undesired qualities, It's neutral and the true battle often lies in accepting the good qualities of our *shadow*, such as our hidden talents, creativity, and all of our untapped potential. Lastly, It's important to make a distinction here because people tend to think that the *shadow* is only made of repressed aspects of our personality, however, there are things in the unconscious that were never conscious in the first place. Also, we have to add the collective unconscious and the prospective nature of the *psyche* to this equation, but more on that in future chapters.

The Personal and Collective Unconscious

Jung's model of the *psyche* divides the unconscious into two categories, the *personal unconscious* and the impersonal or *collective unconscious*.

“The Personal Unconscious contains lost memories, painful ideas that are repressed (I.e. forgotten on purpose), subliminal perceptions, by which are meant sense-perceptions that were not strong enough to reach consciousness, and finally, contents, that are not yet ripe for consciousness. It corresponds to the figure of the shadow so frequently met in dreams” (C. G. Jung - V7.1 – §103).

Consequently, unconscious contents are of a personal nature when we can recognize in our past their effects, their manifestations, and their specific origin. Lastly, it's mainly made out of *complexes*, making the personal shadow. In contrast, the collective unconscious consists of primordial images, i.e., *archetypes*. In summary, *archetypes* are an organizing principle that exists

as a potential to experience something psychologically and physiologically in a similar and definite way. Archetypes are like a blueprint, a structure, or a pattern.

2.2 - Complexes

Recapitulating, everything that is incompatible with the *conscious attitude* will be relegated to or simply remain unconscious. Moreover, Jung states the *conscious attitude* has the natural tendency to be unilateral. This is important for it to be adaptative, contain the unconscious, and develop further. But this is a double-edged sword since the more one-sided the *conscious attitude* gets the less the unconscious can be expressed.

In that sense, neurosis happens when we adopt a rigid and unilateral *conscious attitude* which causes a split between the conscious and unconscious, and the individual is dominated by his *complexes*. Jung explains that “The tendency to split means that parts of the psyche detach themselves from consciousness to such an extent that they not only appear foreign but lead an autonomous life of their own. It need not be a question of hysterical multiple personality, or schizophrenic alterations of personality, but merely of so-called “complexes” that come entirely within the scope of the normal. Complexes are psychic fragments which have split off owing to traumatic influences or certain incompatible tendencies“ (C. G. Jung - V8 – §253).

Furthermore, *complexes* can be grouped around *archetypes* and common patterns of behavior, they are an amalgamation of experiences around a theme, like the *mother* and *father complex*. Due to their archetypal foundation, *complexes* can produce typical thought, emotional, physical, and symbolic patterns, however, their nucleus will always be the individual experience. This means that when it comes to dealing with the *shadow*, even if there are *archetypes* at play, we always have to understand how they are being expressed in an individual context. That's why naming *archetypes* or intellectually learning about them is useless, we always have to focus on the individual experience and correcting the *conscious attitude* that's generating problems.

Complexes are autonomous and people commonly refer to them as “parts” or “aspects” of our personality. In that sense, Jung says that “[...] There is no difference in principle between a fragmentary personality and a complex“ (C. G. Jung - V8 – §202). Moreover, he explains that *complexes* tend to present themselves in a personified form, like the characters that make up our

dreams and figures we encounter during Active Imagination. A modern example of the effects of a *complex* is Bruce Banner and The Hulk. Bruce Banner aligns with the *introverted thinking type*. Plus, he has a very timid, quiet, and cowardly attitude. Naturally, this *conscious attitude* would repress any expression of emotion, assertiveness, and aggression. Hence, the Hulk, a giant impulsive and fearless beast fueled by rage.

But we have to take a step back because it's easy to assume *complexes* are evil and pathologize them. In fact, everyone has *complexes* and this is completely normal, there's no need to panic. What makes them bad is our conscious judgments. We always have to remember that the unconscious reacts to our *conscious attitude*. In other words, our attitude towards the unconscious will determine how we experience a *complex*. As Jung says, "We know that the mask of the unconscious is not rigid—it reflects the face we turn towards it. Hostility lends it a threatening aspect, friendliness softens its features" (C. G. Jung - V12 – §29).

An interesting example is anger, one of the most misunderstood emotions. Collectively, we tend to quickly judge the mildest expression of anger as the works of Satan, that's why most people do everything they can to repress it. But the more we repress something the more it rebels against us, that's why when it finally encounters an outlet, it's this huge possessive and dark thing that destroys our relationships bringing shame and regret.

But to deal with the *shadow*, we must cultivate an open mind towards the unconscious and seek to see both sides of any aspect. Too much anger is obviously destructive, however, when it's properly channeled it can give us the ability to say no and place healthy boundaries. Healthy anger provides us with the courage to end toxic relationships, resolve conflicts intelligently, and become an important fuel to conquer our objectives.

When we allow one-sided judgments to rule our *psyche*, even the most positive trait can be experienced as something destructive. For instance, nowadays, most people run away from their creativity because they think "It's useless, not practical, and such a waste of time". As a result, their creative potential turns poisonous and they feel restless, emotionally numb, and uninspired.

The secret for integration is to establish a relationship with these forsaken parts and seek a new way of healthily expressing them. We achieve that by transforming our *conscious attitude* and this is the main objective of good psychotherapy. The problem isn't the *shadow*, but how we perceive it. Thus, the goal of *shadow integration* is to embody these parts in our conscious personality, because when these unconscious aspects can't be expressed, they usually turn into symptoms.

Dealing With The Puppet Masters

Let's dig deeper. Jung says "The *via regia* to the unconscious [...] is the complex, which is the architect of dreams and of symptoms" (C. G. Jung - V8 – §210). We can see their mischievous works whenever there are overreactions like being taken by a sudden rage or sadness, when we engage in toxic relationship patterns, or when we experience common symptoms of anxiety and depression.

The crazy thing is that while *complexes* are unconscious, they have no relationship with the ego, that's why they can feel like there's a foreign body pulling the strings and manipulating our every move. That's why I like referring to *complexes* as the "puppet masters". In some cases, this dissociation is so severe that people believe there's an outside spirit controlling them. Under this light, Jung says that "Spirits, therefore, viewed from the psychological angle, are unconscious autonomous complexes which appear as projections because they have no direct association with the ego" (C. G. Jung - V8 – §585).

To deal with *complexes*, It's crucial to understand that they distort our interpretation of reality and shape our sense of identity by producing fixed narratives that play on repeat in our minds. These stories prime us to see ourselves and the world in a certain way, also driving our behaviors and decisions. The less conscious we are about them, the more power they have over us.

In that sense, *neurosis* means that a *complex* is ruling the conscious mind and traps the subject in a repeating storyline. For instance, when you're dealing with an inferiority complex (not that I know anything about that!), you'll usually have this nasty voice in your head telling you that you're not enough and you don't matter, and you'll never be able to be successful and will probably

just die alone. These inner monologues tend to be a bit dramatic. But this makes you live in fear and never go after what you truly want because deep down you feel like you don't deserve it. Secretly, you feel jealous of the people who have success, but you're afraid to put yourself out there. Then, you settle for mediocre relationships and a crappy job.

People under the influence of this complex tend to fabricate an illusory narrative that “No one suffers like them” and “Nothing ever works for them”. But when you come up with solutions, they quickly find every excuse imaginable trying to justify why this won't work. They romanticize their own suffering because it gives them an illusory sense of uniqueness. They think that they're so special that the world can't understand them and common solutions are beneath them.

The harsh truth is that they don't want it to work, they hang on to every excuse to avoid growing up, because while they are a victim, there's always someone to blame for their shortcomings. While they play the victim card, they can secretly tyrannize everyone and avoid taking responsibility for their lives.

2.3 - Projection Unveiled

Complexes are also the basis for our projections and directly influence our relationships. The external mirrors our internal dynamics. This means that we unconsciously engage with people to perpetuate these narratives. In the case of a victim mentality, the person will always unconsciously look for an imaginary or real perpetrator to blame. While someone with intimacy issues will have an unconscious tendency to go after emotionally unavailable people who can potentially abandon them. Or they will find a way to sabotage the relationship as soon as it starts to get serious.

Complexes feel like a curse, we find ourselves living the same situations over and over again. The only way to break free from these narratives is by first taking the time to understand them. There are complexes around money and achieving financial success, about our self-image, our capabilities, etc.

One of the most important keys to integrating the shadow is learning how to work with our projections, as everything that is unconscious is first encountered projected. In that sense, *complexes*

are the main material for our personal projections. Let's get more practical, the most flagrant signs of a *complex* operating are overreactions ("feeling triggered") and compulsive behaviors. A projection only takes place via a *projective hook*. In other words, the person in question often possesses the quality you're seeing, however, projection always amplifies it, often to a superhuman or inhuman degree.

For instance, for someone who always avoids conflict and has difficulty asserting their boundaries, interacting with a person who is direct and upfront might evoke a perception of them being highly narcissistic and tyrannical, even if they're acting somewhat normal.

Here are a few pointers to spot projections:

- You see the person as all good or all bad.
- The person is reduced to a single attribute, like being a narcissist or the ultimate flawless spiritual master.
- You put them on a pedestal or feel the need to show your superiority.
- You change your behavior around them.
- Their opinions matter more than your own.
- You're frustrated when they don't correspond to the image you created about them.
- You feel a compulsion toward them (aka a severe Animus and Anima entanglement or limerence).

As you can see, projection significantly reduces our ability to see people as a nuanced human being. But when we withdraw a projection, we can finally see the real person, our emotional reactions diminish as well as their influence over us. It's impossible to stop projecting entirely

because the psyche is alive and as our *conscious attitude* changes, the unconscious reacts. But we can create a healthy relationship with our projections by understanding them as a message from the unconscious.

However, withdrawing projections requires taking responsibility and realizing how we often act in the exact ways we condemn, leading to a moral differentiation. In the case of a positive aspect, like admiring someone's skill or intelligence, we must make it our duty to develop these capacities for ourselves instead of making excuses.

2.4 - The Golden Shadow

If you take only one thing from this chapter, remember this: The key to integrating the shadow lies in transforming our perception of what's been repressed and taking the time to give these aspects a more mature expression through concrete actions.

To achieve that, Carl Jung united both Freud's (*etiology*) and Adler's (*teleology*) perspectives. In Jung's view, symptoms are historical and have a cause but they also have a direction and purpose. The first one is always concerned with finding the origins of our symptoms and behaviors. The basic idea is that once the cause becomes conscious and we experience a catharsis, the emotional charge and symptoms can be reduced.

The second is concerned with understanding what we're trying to achieve with our strategies. For example, adopting people-pleasing and codependent behaviors is often a result of having experienced emotionally unstable parents whom you always tried to appease. On the flip side, keeping codependent behaviors can also be a way of avoiding taking full responsibility for your life, as you're constantly looking for someone to save you.

That's why investigating the past is only half of the equation and often gets people stuck, you need the courage to ask yourself how you've been actively contributing to keeping your destructive narratives and illusions alive. Most of the time we hang on to *complexes* to avoid change and take on new responsibilities. We avoid facing that we're the ones producing our own suffering. Yes, I know this realization is painful but this can set you free. The *shadow integration* process

demands that we take full responsibility for our lives, and in doing so, we open the possibility of writing new stories.

This leads us to the final and most important step of all: **“Insight into the myth of the unconscious must be converted into ethical obligation”** (Barbara Hannah - Encounters With The Soul - p. 25). The Shadow holds the key to uncovering our hidden genius, being more creative, building confidence, creating healthy relationships, and achieving a deeper sense of meaning. But integrating the shadow isn't an intellectual exercise, these aspects exist as a potential and will only be developed through concrete actions.

Let's say you always wanted to be a musician but you never went for it because you didn't want to disappoint your parents and you doubted your capabilities. You chose a different career and this creative talent is now repressed. After a few years, you realize that you must attend this calling. You can spend some time learning why you never did it in the first place, like how you gave up on your dreams and have bad financial habits just like your parents. Or how you never felt you were good enough because you experienced toxic shame.

This is important in the beginning to evoke new perspectives and help challenge these beliefs, but most people stop there. However, the only thing that truly matters is what you do with your insights. You can only integrate the shadow by devoting time and energy to nurturing these repressed aspects and making practical changes.

In this case, you'd need to make time to play music, compose, maybe take classes, and you'd have to decide if this is a new career or if it'll remain a sacred hobby. You integrate the shadow and further your individuation journey by doing and following your fears. That's why obsessing with shadow work prompts will get you nowhere. If you realize you have codependent behaviors, for instance, you don't have to “keep digging”, you have to focus on fully living your life, exploring your talents, and developing intrinsic motivation.

You must sacrifice your childish illusions as there's no magical solution. Healing and integration aren't a one-time thing, but a construction. It happens when we put ourselves in movement and with every small step we take. Lastly, Carl Jung's preferred method for investigating

the unconscious and correcting the *conscious attitude* was dream analysis and active imagination, which will be covered in future chapters. But I want to share one last personal example. Last year, I had many active imagination experiences in which I was presented with a sword and I had to wield it.

Upon investigation, I understood that this was a symbol for the logos, the verb, and the written word. I instinctively knew I was being called to write and couldn't run away from it, even though I've never done it in my life. Of course, I had many doubts and thought I'd never be able to write anything worthy, however, I decided to trust my soul and persevered. As you can see, this is no simple task, I completely rearranged my schedule, changed my habits, and even my business structure so I could write as often as possible. But it was worth it and that's how the book you're reading came to be. That's also why I chose the sword and snake to be on the cover, representing Eros and Logos. Finally, if our real life doesn't reflect our inner-work, this pursuit is meaningless and most likely childish wishful and magical thinking.

3 - The Puer and Puella Aeternus

In the next chapters, I'd like to devote some time to explore one of the main problems of our *zeitgeist*, many people have been refusing to grow up and remain childish for too long. Marie Von Franz foresaw this issue in the 70's with her incredible book, *The Problem of The Puer Aeternus*. This is one of those books that can completely change your life if you apply its knowledge, and since I read it, my life took on a new course and I was finally able to accept my call to adventure and mature. As you may notice, this is a subject very dear to my heart since it mingles with my personal story.

I dare to say that, in people under 40, most of their psychological problems stem from avoiding truly becoming an adult and fully taking responsibility for their lives. I even analyzed people approaching their 60s still dealing with this very same problem. That's why I felt the duty to share everything I've personally learned from overcoming this condition and all the insights I've gained after having analyzed people from over twenty countries.

Before we start, I want to clarify that many people conflate this complex with things like CPTSD and personality disorders. Although they often blend, being identified with the *Puer Aeternus* and *Puella Aeterna* means that you have a childish view of the world and relationships. According to Jung, this infantile *conscious attitude* is the main factor that causes problems.

That said, I want to focus precisely on helping you transform this *conscious attitude* by providing tools and insights based on Jungian Psychology. As someone who overcame CPTSD, I understand that by addressing this complex, we may also heal ourselves directly or indirectly from trauma, but I emphasize that these areas are not all the same thing but can be interrelated. Lastly, you'll also understand how this archetype possesses an invaluable mission.

3.1 - Overcoming The Mother and Father Complex

“Life calls us forth to independence, and anyone who does not heed this call because of childish laziness or timidity is threatened with neurosis. And once this has broken out, it becomes an increasingly valid reason for running away from life and remaining forever in the morally poisonous atmosphere of infancy” (C. G. Jung - V5 – §461).

Carl Jung says the first challenge life proposes to everyone is to free themselves from the protection of their mothers and fathers and take their call to adventure. However, to do so we must draw our sword and kill the dragon of desire for eternal childhood and develop authority, independence, and take responsibility for our own lives. This is popularly known as “The Hero's Journey”.

The ones that rise up to this archetypal challenge finally uncover their individuality, unique talents, and carve their own paths. But if you choose to remain childish, you start living regressively, blindly striving to recreate the illusions of childhood. The popular term for this condition today is the man-child or the woman-child, in Jungian Psychology, we call it the *Puer Aeternus* and *Puella Aeterna*. In other words, these are people who refuse to grow up and they avoid taking any responsibility for their lives. They do this because they're constantly looking for the easy way out and never want to put any real effort into anything. The payoff is a mediocre and meaningless existence.

I must tell you, until you psychologically emancipate yourself from your parents, you'll never be your own person and you will be forever doomed to repeat their stories and live under their shadow. If you want to truly own your life, you must make your own decisions, go your own way, and face the consequences of your actions. That said, we'll begin our exploration by uncovering the dynamics of the mother and father complexes, as they're arguably, the two archetypal principles that have the most influence over our *psyche*. Jung says the mother is the embodiment of the collective unconscious and is connected to the Eros principle, the sensual and chthonic realm, and is about pleasure and nourishment.

From the unconscious springs our life force, creativity, and the possibility for renewal and rebirth. The mother opens the possibility for a relationship with our inner world and our soul, and usually determines how we relate with our own emotions and build relationships. In contrast, the father embodies the Logos principle and the spiritual realm. It's about authority, responsibility, tradition, and preservation. The father is the law and represents the world of moral commandments and prohibitions, that is why he opposes the instinctual tendency of the unconscious. The father also gives us the possibility to overcome the mother, develop our faith, and relationship with the external world.

Both principles balance one another and a compensation to any side will invariably lead to problems. To make things simple, for both men and women, too much of the father principle kills absolutely everything that's related to the feminine principle, and too much of the mother principle kills every quality of the father principle.

Moreover, in the son, the father serves as a model for the *persona*, and the mother as a model for the *anima*. In the daughter, things are switched, the mother serves as a basis for the *persona* while the father serves as a basis for the *animus*. But don't worry about this now, there will be an in-depth exploration in the chapter about the *animus* and *anima*. That said, it's a common mistake to associate the real mother or father as fully responsible for these complexes, as this is only partially true. Jung says "Interpretation in terms of the parents is, however, simply a *façon de parler*. In reality the whole drama takes place in the individual's own *psyche*, where the "parents" are not the parents at all but only their imagos: they are representations which have arisen from the conjunction of parental peculiarities with the individual disposition of the child" (C. G. Jung - V5 – §505).

This evokes an important realization because everyone believes they know their parents, or caregivers, extremely well, but this couldn't be further from the truth! This relationship is mediated by an archetypal projection that evokes a cloud of misjudgments and gives the parents an illegitimate power over their child. Moreover, we always have to account for someone's *conscious attitude* and individual pre-dispositions, in other words, how one reacts to their parents and environment is also determinant to the development of these images or as I like to call it, "inner parents".

A classic example is the devouring mother, the kind of smothering woman who is constantly sabotaging every attempt of their child to become independent. I can't dispute that this is truly suffocating, but even though she might objectively be "devouring", you have to realize that she only has this much power over you because this triggers something within. In reality, you're the one devouring yourself when you refuse to grow and take ownership for your life.

In that sense, our own inabilities and fears of adult life are projected upon the parents and over time become a maneuver to avoid dealing with reality and realizing that the struggle is internal. At first, this understanding might bring shame and frustration, but this is exactly what can

set you free. If you can shift internally, the overbearing effect of your parents will not only diminish, but you'll harness the necessary strength to conquer authority over your own life and relate to these archetypal principles healthily, free from parental influence.

Because "The more a person shrinks from adapting himself to reality, the greater becomes the fear which increasingly besets his path at every point. Thus a vicious circle is formed: fear of life and people causes more shrinking back, and this in turn leads to infantilism and finally "into the mother." The reasons for this are generally projected outside oneself: the fault lies with external circumstances, or else the parents are made responsible. And indeed, it remains to be found out how much the mother is to blame for not letting the son [or daughter] go. The son [or daughter] will naturally try to explain everything by the wrong attitude of the mother, but he would do better to refrain from all such futile attempts to excuse his own ineptitude by laying the blame on his parents" (C. G. Jung - V5 - §456).

The Life Script

In practice, we can understand the effects of the parental complex in terms of a life script. Simply put, when our ego-complex is formed, it comes with a rooted desire for positive regard and appreciation, this is not only an emotional need but a biological one. We're wired to bond with our caregivers and to do so, we unconsciously seek to match their expectations about us to receive love, validation, nurturing, and protection.

These expectations take the form of a script. From an early age, we receive a set of rules, guidelines, and ideals that must be followed. These scripts includes things like how a man or lady should behave, what kind of work is acceptable, how one should dress, who you're allowed to date, a concept of god, and even how one should clean their house. In summary, it's a manual detailing how you should live your life.

Now, I want to take a step back and emphasize that the relationship with our parents can be enriching in many ways, they can teach us important lessons and good values. However, regarding this script, it's tricky for parents to respect their children's individuality while providing healthy discipline. So much so that Jung says the biggest burden on a child is the *unlived life* of the parents.

In her book *Psychotherapy*, Von Franz also explores how children tend to live out their parent's shadows and repressed desires, but I digress.

That said, usually, when we fulfill this script we tend to be praised or at least avoid altercations, and when we don't, we're usually shunned and feel abandoned and rejected. It's also important to highlight that everything is being filtered through a childish ego that is extra sensitive to everything that happens. In some cases, mild altercations can leave a profound impact since they mingle with individual pre-dispositions, while in other cases, traumatic experiences are undeniable, but discussing this is out of the scope of this book.

Over time, the presence of the mother or father isn't required anymore and the script becomes internalized. Many people can even hear this set of rules in their parents' voices inside their heads, usually in the form of a vicious inner critic. The problem is that this script comes with fears, limitations, toxic relationship patterns, and in many cases a lack of permission to achieve financial success. Not only that, but this script often has nothing to do with our personalities, so we live a life suppressing our authentic selves in hopes of feeling loved and accepted, which inevitably leads to depression, anxiety, toxic relationships, and a generalized sense of feeling lost.

Before this script, there are two main routes we can adopt. The first group will spend their lives trying to fulfill this ideal image, while the other will spend their lives trying to antagonize their parents and do the exact opposite. These positions aren't static and an individual can switch poles from time to time, but either way, it's not a conscious decision and both are living their lives in reaction to their parents. It's a childish position that sabotages all your attempts to become truly independent and create your own life.

In that sense, Jung states "An individual is infantile because he has freed himself insufficiently, or not at all, from his childish environment and his adaptation to his parents, with the result that he has a false reaction to the world: on the one hand he reacts as a child towards his parents, always demanding love and immediate emotional rewards, while on the other hand he is so identified with his parents through his close ties with them that he behaves like his father or his mother. He is incapable of living his own life and finding the character that belongs to him" (C. G. Jung - V5 – §431). Another kind of infantilism is when someone is able to acquire some adaptation to outer life but remains childish when it comes to emotions and relationships. We have plenty of

examples in TV shows like Frasier, Chandler from Friends, or the character Sheldon from The Big Bang Theory.

Regardless of the position you might identify yourself with, certain patterns are common for everyone under the influence of the parental complex. The most pungent one is a weak ego and having an external sense of self-worth. Because we learned that there are a lot of conditions to receive “love”, we unconsciously start playing a character and adopt the values and traits we believe will give us the most praise or will help us cope. We unconsciously believe that if somehow we can become perfect, we'll finally be fully loved and accepted. In this process, we inevitably repress talents, our true desires, and important personality traits. If we take this to an extreme, we might feel like there's something inherently wrong with us or even that we're broken.

Now, I don't want to reduce everything to the parental complex as these feelings of shame and inadequacy can also be amplified by experiences such as bullying, comparison between siblings, emotional neglect, cultural standards, environments that foster competition, and also by individual tendencies. That said, all of these experiences tend to happen while we're still maturing psychologically and our egos aren't strong enough to differentiate between someone's projections upon us and who we truly are. Because we need to maintain a bond with our caregivers, we tend to internalize all of this shame and start to believe that we're the problem, instead of realizing that they might be wrong for placing all of this upon us.

Consequently, we never develop the capacity to make our own judgments, and we're constantly subject to the opinions of others. We allow their limitations and fears to define who we are. To compensate for this shame-based identity, we tend to develop an immaculate *persona* and over-identify with everything that we do. If we're less than perfect, we're plagued by feelings of inferiority and a hostile inner dialogue.

In *From Surviving To Thriving*, Pete Walter also explores how we tend to fall prey to “salvation fantasies” to cope with these feelings. This basically means that we usually elect a certain practice or habit that must be executed with absolute perfection otherwise, we dramatically feel like the world is about to end. This involves things like having the perfect morning routine, a spartan exercise regiment, or a flawless diet.

These practices promote an illusory sense of control, give us an ego boost, and we feel like we can somehow be redeemed. But since it always tends to be extreme and compulsive, it always generates a backlash. Thus, this vicious circle fueled by toxic shame and self-hatred continues. To end this cycle, one needs to learn how to engage with these practices from a place of self-love rather than punishment.

Toxic shame is also the origin of many violent and destructive fantasies. All of this internalized anger turns into poisonous self-hatred and the desire for revenge when it should be directed to help us break free from the parental complex. Anger is just like any other emotion, it shouldn't be demonized because it always turns against us, instead, we should find healthy ways to express it, such as placing boundaries and transforming it into a drive to pursue our autonomy and accomplish our goals.

The Archetypal Challenge

In the end, the problem is that we're constantly judging ourselves through the lenses of our parents, other people, and cultural standards instead of crafting our own values and finding our own character. Resisting this task evokes a feeling of being lost, not knowing who we are, unbearable loneliness, and an irrational fear of living life. The choice of blaming the parents for our own ineptitudes is always there. For a moment, we feel justified, but in doing so we're simply perpetuating a childish existence and the only certainty is that things will never get better. I get it, you probably had a tough childhood and many things you went through are objectively unfair. It's not your fault and I know it hurts.

For some time, it's understandable to be a rebel, seek revenge, want someone to be held accountable, and expect that other people make things better for you. But over time this becomes poisonous, corrodes your soul, and you start hurting people who care about you. I know it's scary, but you have to realize that now you're an adult and you have everything you need to turn your life around. When you take responsibility, you stop relating to the world as a child and you gain a new powerful perspective that gives you agency. You'll never be able to change what happened or other people, but you can change how you experience everything internally and this will set you free.

Becoming an adult is an archetypal challenge everyone has to endure. However, if you play the victim and refuse to take life by its horns, I'm sorry to tell you but all you'll be able to see is darkness. Or perhaps you're just floating in a bubble that's about to pop, it's a half-life that I don't wish for anyone. Listen to that voice that wants more and take your call to adventure. The dragon you must kill lives within. It's time to let go of your childishness because every time you hesitate this dragon gains power. When you truly go all in and decide to take responsibility, your life acquires meaning and your relationships become enriching. Commit to fully living life but remember that this is a process, take one step at a time, and you might fall, but that's ok. Be gentle with yourself and pick yourself up. Don't underestimate the power of decisiveness and small increments, that's how significant changes come to be.

Lastly, this section about the parental complex is meant to give you clarity and I'll share everything I know in the following chapters to help you, but the only thing that matters is if you act upon your insights. Psychological knowledge is a double-edged sword, some people use it to perpetuate even more their childish behaviors, but the wise ones see it as a map to understand themselves better and do everything they can to change. But I believe you're asking yourself what happens when you hesitate to become an adult and allow the dragon to win. Well, this leads us to the problem of *Puer Aeternus* and *Puella Aeterna*.

3.2 - The Provisional Life

"The spirit of evil is fear, negation, the adversary who opposes life in its struggle for eternal duration and thwarts every great deed, who infuses into the body the poison of weakness and age through the treacherous bite of the serpent; he is the spirit of regression, who threatens us with bondage to the mother and with dissolution and extinction in the unconscious. **For the hero, fear is a challenge and a task, because only boldness can deliver from fear. And if the risk is not taken, the meaning of life is somehow violated**" (C. G. Jung - V5 - §551).

The condition of the *Puer Aeternus* and *Puella Aeterna* can be easily described as a general fear of life and avoidance of responsibility. They are the child of the promise and are full of great potential, however, they refuse the task of developing their gifts and being in service of something greater than themselves. There's a poignant illusion that the fantasy world is better than reality, even though they secretly know that this is just a maneuver to remain childish. But having one foot in the

eternal childhood paradise gives them a youthful energy and fills them with creativity, inspiration, and a peculiar magnetism. They tend to be full of ideals and know everything that's wrong with society. When they look at adults all they can see are people trapped "in the system". They are the ones who know better! Everything that resembles responsibilities and commitments seems terrifying. They feel trapped, but it's only because this confronts their childishness. The result is a *provisional life*.

Helton Baynes, a personal friend of Carl Jung, says that to live provisionally means to abdicate from your capacity to own your decisions and take responsibility. In the place of these functions, the Puer tends to adopt unnecessary drama, confusion, and self-justification. When a function that should be conscious is repressed, a sense of inferiority and self-accusation naturally emerges. "Hence people who are living the provisional life are constantly impelled to explain to anyone who will listen how the circumstances of their life, their ill health, their intense sympathy for the suffering of others, their extreme sensitivity to noise, light, heat, cold, psychic atmosphere, climate, constipation, insomnia and the rest, all conspire to prevent them from living a normal responsible existence" (H. G. Baynes - *Analytical Psychology and The British Mind*, p. 74).

In other words, the *Puer* lives in the illusion that everything is harder for him. They secretly enjoy being perceived as incapable and fragile so others take responsibility in their place. They're masters in calculating exactly how little effort they can put in so they don't get fired from their jobs or have to face a breakup. To compensate for this mediocre life they're abducted by the intoxicating realm of possibilities, potentials, and romantic obsessions. There's a perpetual longing for the perfect thing and waiting for the perfect conditions. When everything falls apart they look for someone to blame, when in reality, they never commit to anything long enough and never go all in.

Evidently, they lack consistency and long-term thinking. The results they want to obtain are always disconnected from the effort and time it requires. Behind this mindset, there's a childish expectation that they should master everything on their first try. As soon as it gets difficult or they get their first results and realize it'll require effort to progress, they abandon everything. Sticking to the process involves realizing that they aren't a special snowflake and will have to endure the learning process just like everybody else. Many fall on the perfectionism side, but this is only a protection against an imaginary failure. The mindset "If I never try I can't ever fail" perfectly encapsulates this. This tends to mingle with procrastination, and as a result, they're constantly stuck.

But procrastination is only a symptom of something deeper, their desire to never grow up and fully take responsibility for their lives.

They refuse to pay the price to achieve any greatness, but this shouldn't matter, after all, they're constantly substituting reality with their fantasies. In fantasy land, they can continue dreaming about everything they want to achieve and remain completely inert. To compensate for this lack of action, their fantasies usually involve megalomaniac deeds, and as long as they tell everyone about their hypothetical plans they can delude themselves into thinking they're doing something productive. That's why the quickest way to realize if someone is being influenced by a negative mother complex is a constant search for comfort, one of the most poisonous drugs given by the spirit of mediocrity.

Yes, the *Puer* takes pride in his laziness but everything is a maneuver to stay in this stagnant endless loop and avoid dealing with reality. They become hostages to their own fantasies and little do they know that real life can set them free because it's in the real world that their fantasies must be given shape and be concretized. Many *Puers* and *Puellas* are highly intelligent and love "deep conversations", but there's a huge problem: They only understand things intellectually. There's no action and experience behind it, it's a half-knowledge that has no life. Deep down, they are huge hypocrites, because their ideals do not hold up in reality and they're too afraid to face the world and actually live by them.

When they're confronted about their lack of responsibility, the problem is never in themselves. They always blame their parents and use their past as an excuse. Or they blame "the system" and the inability of others to see how incredibly amazing they are. Everything so they don't have to become an adult. This insidious sense of entitlement makes them expect the world to bend to their will and cater to their every need, without them giving anything valuable in return nor applying real effort. "Discipline is for stupid people"! - They say. That's precisely why they never accomplish anything great, never develop their talents, and settle for a mediocre life. Unfortunately, if you don't give your blood and get your hands dirty, as Jung puts it, "The meaning of life is violated".

Moreover, this incessant search to keep their fantasies alive is poison for the soul, "The perpetual hesitation of the neurotic to launch out into life is readily explained by his desire to stand

aside so as not to get involved in the dangerous struggle for existence. But anyone who refuses to experience life must stifle his desire to live—in other words, he must commit partial suicide” (C. G. Jung - V5 – §165).

Here we arrive at the most critical element: The one that refuses to live is already partially dead. The longing for childhood paradise can turn into a constant flirt with death. Here, vices, self-destructing habits, reckless behaviors, or porn addiction can all be means to perpetuate this state of unconsciousness and avoidance. We'll explore practical steps to finally growing up but we still have to discuss another secret inescapable drug: *limerence*, popularly known as love addiction or romantic obsessions.

3.3 - Overcoming Love Addiction

The term Limerence was coined by Dorothy Tennov in the 70s and accurately describes what Jung calls a severe *animus* and *anima* projection. This entanglement feels like a spiritual experience and generates an instant recognition like you've always known that person and perhaps shared hundreds of past lives. While experiencing limerence, you feel completely enmeshed with the other person, like you two are made of the same fabric. You can anticipate everything they're thinking and feeling, and it feels like the most precious thing in the Universe.

Many people even report crazy experiences like being able to feel the presence or the smell of their partner even though they are thousands of miles apart. Everything feels magical, but if you have ever experienced limerence, you know it can turn dark very quickly. The immense highs are compensated by massive amounts of anxiety and constantly obsessing about this one particular person. It's like your life depends on it.

However, relationships based on heavy *animus* and *anima* projections tend to be wildly compulsive and people often enter a vicious cycle of breaking up and reconciling over and over again. You can't understand why, but something in you becomes hooked to this cycle and you know it hurts. But just like an addict, you want just one more drink of this poisonous “love”.

Some people delude themselves and stay in this cycle for years but more often than not, it inevitably leads to a break-up that crushes your spirit. Now, you feel like a piece of you is gone and you lose your motivation to live life entirely. The crazy thing is that many people experience limerence with people they met just once or exchanged a few texts online. In many cases, it's completely platonic and the chance of being together was always nonexistent. However, they give in to these poisonous fantasies and allow them to completely steal their will to live.

That's why I consider limerence to be one of the most powerful drugs that exist and in my opinion, it's one of the main factors behind toxic and codependent relationships. The origins of these dynamics seem to be associated with an unresolved parental complex and attachment issues. We'll focus on the first one by discussing how a shame-based identity and enmeshment triggers love addiction and codependency.

The False Self

To simplify things, we can say that a “relationship blueprint” emerges from the experience we have with our parents. Let's quickly recap that when receiving love and validation is heavily dependent on fulfilling the life script we discussed previously, it generates an external sense of self-worth and favors a shame-based identity. To compensate for these feelings of shame and inadequacy, we tend to create a carefully curated *persona* or a *false self*. We desperately want to be seen and accepted and we strive to accomplish that by being immaculate in everything that we do. “If I can only do this one thing right they'll finally see me, they'll finally love me!”.

But we know this day never comes and when it finally does, it creates even more resentment. Why? ... Because we're not the ones receiving this “love”, but the character we're playing. Needless to say, we lose touch with our authentic selves and become enslaved to public opinion. Many people even proudly say that they're social chameleons and can “create” different personalities in each group they participate in. They have the ability to morph into exactly what people expect of them, but they lose themselves in these characters and have no idea who they are. They like to be called “empaths”, but this is just another way of saying that you're severely codependent.

In the same vein, another common pattern is to put on this self-sufficient facade and act like nothing can phase you. Ironically, there's always someone who can truly see us, but we usually get scared and run away because we don't want to break the character, and we're not ready to accept who we truly are. In summary, this external sense of self-worth primes us to abandon our true selves and instead of looking within, we begin seeking this magical approval in others, "If only this person can love me, then I'll finally feel worthy".

The problem is that even when we get that, it's not enough, because the person isn't "loving us in the right way" or "they don't fully get us". First, this happens because we're not showing our authentic selves. If someone accepts the facade we're putting out, it falls flat, it's not real, and we resent them. If someone fully sees us for who we are, we also resent them for accepting what we judge as intolerable. It's a lose-lose situation. Second, this happens because we're not looking for a partner, we're unconsciously seeking the approval of our parents. It's a childish desire for an idealized acceptance. In that sense, the false self fuels love addiction because all of the repressed qualities of our shadow are projected, and we see in other people an idealized version of what we would like to become.

In that sense, when we explore limerent fantasies it's not uncommon to hear that the person has a talent you wanted to have, they're pursuing a career you always wanted but never went for it, or they have qualities you feel you lack, like confidence or being creative and in touch with their emotions. These fantasies can give us the key to understanding what we have to develop for ourselves. The things we admire also exist in potential inside of us. Therefore, we must develop these qualities to finally stop seeking external validation and focus on becoming who we're meant to be.

The Devouring Mother

Now, the second factor that contributes to codependency and limerence is having experienced enmeshment. This term was coined by Salvador Minuchin and perfectly describes the effects of what Jung calls the devouring mother. It's important to realize that a parent is devouring because they're codependent themselves and that's why they can be incredibly suffocating and overwhelming. By the way, I'm using the term devouring mother because that's primarily a feminine dynamic, however, fathers can also be devouring. Although it's less frequent.

Simply put, enmeshment happens when there aren't any boundaries between you and your parents, everything is blurred and there's no sense of individuality since they treat you as an extension of themselves. They'll usually make you the reason for their whole existence and will make sure that you feel this weight. They will tell you that everything they do is for you and list all the sacrifices they had to make. So you better behave, act exactly like they want, and fulfill all of their expectations to pay this insurmountable debt. Well, no wonder we tend to feel like a burden and start to let go of our wants and needs.

Furthermore, enmeshment is usually coupled with parentification, which has many degrees, but basically, you feel responsible at some level for their emotional well-being. Instead of you being a kid, you suddenly become their confidant. They tell you everything that's wrong with their relationship and even ask you to make important decisions for them. If you have siblings, you usually become a second parent to them and start bearing many responsibilities that a kid shouldn't have.

When parents are codependent, they unconsciously feel threatened when their kid wants to develop their autonomy and tend to sabotage all of their attempts to grow up. If you find yourself constantly trying to appease their emotions you'll forget about yourself. You might even feel that having your own dreams is wrong and selfish, the problem is that this leads to people-pleasing and a severe lack of boundaries. In that sense, a common indicator of enmeshment is having sexual dreams with your parents, I don't think there's anything more telling than that.

Now, If you were parentified, I know that you feel excessively responsible for your parents and perhaps constantly guilt-tripped. However, it's crucial to understand that appeasing them was never your responsibility; you shouldn't parent your parents. As an adult, you must realize that putting this weight on yourself is another way to avoid making your own decisions and living your own life. Obviously, I'm not telling you to stop caring and helping your parents. But the only for this relationship to be healthy is if you both act as adults. I emphasize once again the importance of individuating from our parents and becoming our own person.

Main Patterns

Now, when we combine these factors, we have the perfect combo for dysfunctional relationships. The mother and father complex are projected and the “codependent relationship blueprint” is activated. Now, we expect our partner to fulfill the role of a substitute parent and narcissistically cater to our needs. We selfishly expect other people to fill our inner voids and provide us with a sense of meaning and purpose. We're after that mother gaze and we want to be fully seen and accepted. For it to happen, this object has to be magical. We want all of that to come from an immaculate being whom we put on a pedestal, so they can finally correspond to our idealized fantasies.

In that sense, the limerent object who receives the *animus* or *anima* projection has the function of compensating for all our inferiorities and healing all our wounds. We believe that our entire life will be fixed once we receive validation from this god-like figure. That's the primary root of romantic obsessions and the *modus operandi* of *Puers* and *Puellas*. This tends to happen because people who experience severe limerence usually feel lost, don't have a sense of purpose, don't have clarity about who they are, and don't feel proud about the lives they're living. Instead of facing this reality and taking action to change their lives they unconsciously choose to indulge in obsessive fantasies, which usually come in moments of extreme frustration and distress. In this light, limerence conceals a desire to be rescued and a childish idea that everything will be magically solved once you're together.

Moreover, Von Franz explains that *Puers* and *Puellas* follow two major tendencies. In the first case, we have “Don Juanism”. This pattern is present in both men and women and involves constantly hopping from relationship to relationship unconsciously seeking for their mothers or fathers. People trapped in this pattern tragically sacrifice their personalities to fulfill romantic idealizations. They're usually overly identified with their bodies and become addicted to winning sexual validation. However, despite all of their encounters, they experience excruciating loneliness since who receives validation is always the false self.

Also, they're incapable of maintaining any long-term relationship since they flee as soon as their idealizations are challenged. When commitment is at stake, sadly, they usually choose to keep pursuing their illusions. Jung also referred to this pattern as the anima-woman or animus-man. In

the second case, *Puers* and *Puellas* avoid relationships entirely by creating an intellectual shield where feelings don't stand a chance and their Eros and sexuality are sacrificed. Usually, that's a maneuver to escape the incestuous influence of the mother. But in both cases, the libido remains attached to the parents, or better put, to their fantastical “never land”.

Integration

Finally, let's talk about integration. It's interesting that when we analyze limerent fantasies they usually highlight repressed desires, needs, talents, and a picture of the life we wish we could be living. People usually say they got attracted because the person seemed confident and authentic, they're following their passions, they're independent, or they're creative and emotionally expressive. Perhaps they do something you always wanted to do but never had the courage or they have a talent you admire. But instead of developing your own personality and exploring your potential, you want to live vicariously through them and end up replicating codependent dynamics.

You start seeing the other as an extension of yourself and because you get all of your validation from them, there's also an underlying controlling aspect. You want them to correspond to your fantasies and demands, and if they don't, you feel frustrated, sad, and sometimes even betrayed. However, it's imperative to understand that you're not seeing the real person in front of you, only your projection since limerence is a mild psychotic state.

Although all of this seems quite complex, the solution is simple. It obviously requires effort and dedication, but it's still fairly simple: You have to fully accept your reality and direct all the energy you spend daydreaming to developing yourself and creating a meaningful life. First, the origins of these fantasies are connected to an unresolved parental complex, that's why it's imperative to individuate from your parents. Second, you must understand what was projected upon your limerent object and develop these qualities for yourself. This will involve making practical changes to create a life in which you can explore your potential and feel truly happy. For this step, you can use the tools provided in the second chapter.

Also, your view about relationships and how it feels to be in love will have to be updated. It's funny, but when you're used to experiencing limerence, healthy relationships seem boring. But

the truth is that connection and intimacy take time to build. But again, a deep bond is impossible if we're disconnected from our authentic selves, and one of the keys to making this happen is dealing with our *animus* or *anima*. We'll cover that in chapter six.

As a final thought, becoming an adult also involves coming to terms with the flawed parents we had. One of the main obstacles is being able to conciliate how paradoxical parents can be, with their good and terrible qualities. As kids, we usually experience a split between the good parent and the bad parent. This functions as a protection mechanism to provide safety since a childish ego can't hold paradoxical views. In that sense, we tend to view one parent as all bad and the other as all good. When exploring the main patterns of *Puers* and *Puellas*, we find that men usually idealize their mothers and reject their fathers, especially if the mother has devouring qualities. As for women, they tend to idealize their fathers and reject their mothers. The main problem is that while heavy idealizations are involved, healthy romantic relationships are impossible because there is an unconscious commitment to the parents.

Moreover, when you fully reject one of them, you lose all the positive qualities of this complex and they become your shadow. Simply put, men become weak and emasculated, this is popularly known as the nice-guy syndrome, while women become overly intellectual and deprived of their femininity. These patterns can be switched although they're less frequent. That said, A great part of our work is being able to conciliate these paradoxical parental *imagos* within so we can become more whole. To many people, this also opens the door to recreating their relationship with their parents. If this possibility exists, I always encourage people to take it.

3.4 - Facing God's Dark Side

Another deeply important facet of the parental complex is how it impacts our concept of God because ultimately, as John Mark Comer says, this idea shapes who we are. The mother and father *imagos* are projected upon God and we tend to recreate the same relationship dynamics. In this light, toxic shame and perfectionism are especially poisonous for our relationship with the divine since we feel constantly punished, unworthy, and abandoned. If we're not immaculate, we feel one step closer to experiencing God's wrath. As a coping mechanism, many people develop religious OCD.

The parental complex, especially the *father imago* since he's a representative of the spirit, constantly interferes with our religious views. If it's not addressed, we're left with a childish and incomplete view of God. This immaturity also makes *Puers* and *Puellas* easy prey for cults since the parental *imagos* are projected onto a guru. In doing so, they exempt themselves from making choices, taking responsibilities, and having to think for themselves.

Naturally, many want to experiment with untraditional paths but their incessant longing for the “eternal mother” constantly betrays them and frequently takes the form of obsessive and compulsive spiritual pursuits. In fact, many make their mission to pursue their “ego-death” or “kundalini awakening”. Eventually, they achieve these experiences but the results are nothing like the “eternal bliss”, it's the exact opposite. After you experience a brief moment of relief and “enlightenment”, you're left with no motivation whatsoever to continue living your life. You're taken by a state of apathy, depression, anxiety, and extreme isolation. In worst cases, there's a psychotic outbreak. Now, they are plagued by weird visions and persecutory fantasies.

But why does this happen? Shouldn't a spiritual pursuit elevate you to a state of happiness? Well, the main problem is that for an infantile ego, getting in touch with the unconscious has a disintegrating effect on the personality. Once again, Von Franz explains that obsessive spiritual pursuits conceal a deep desire to escape from the responsibilities of adult life. Robert Bly jokingly refers to this condition as the flying boy or flying girl.

This compulsion can be amplified when spirituality becomes a coping mechanism to deal with traumatic influences and avoid moral confrontation. This often takes the form of magical thinking and spiritual bypassing. In the first case, people believe they can erase generations of trauma by lighting a candle, following a guided meditation on YouTube, or doing one energy healing session with this “real shaman” via Zoom. The truth is that healing is a construction and not a one-time thing. It requires a series of practices anchored in reality and as Jung says, time is an irreplaceable factor for healing. In the second case, people use spiritual practices and ideas to avoid uncomfortable emotions and necessary confrontations. This tends to mingle with toxic positivity and as soon as they feel something, they immediately shut it down. There's a tendency to dissociate and if this is taken to an extreme, psychotic symptoms can appear since the dissociated part takes over the conscious personality.

Moreover, these spiritual pursuits tend to be empty and people acquire a false knowledge that lacks real experience. It's only an intellectual exercise, pure mental masturbation. Beliefs like “we only have the now”, “everything is transient”, “the real world is an illusion”, “nothing matters”, or “I must kill my ego”, are especially poisonous as they tend to fuel an elaborate scheme to justify not growing up. This enmeshment with the unconscious also evokes a feeling that you know something special that others don't, but this also creates loneliness as this is based on infantile arrogance. Trying to possess the unconscious always opens the door for psychic inflation and we see all sorts of crazy stuff, like people thinking they're the next incarnation of Jesus. In extreme cases, this excessive contact with the unconscious turns the longing for the eternal mother into death fantasies. Sadly, many succumb to it as there's a tendency to romanticize death and suffering.

Now, let me be clear that I'm not advocating against spiritual pursuits, once more, the problem is a childish attitude toward the unconscious. When you refuse life and its practical aspects, the unconscious quickly turns dark and devouring. Moreover, when you use spirituality to avoid moral confrontation the shadow always has its revenge. Conversely, a strong ego-complex gives you solid roots in reality and acts as a counterpoint to the unconscious. It allows you to safely engage with it and maintain an objective perspective without being engulfed by it. It gives you the ability to confront the unconscious material, elaborate it, and integrate it into your life. Without the ego, you're bound to face the ruthless disintegrating facet of the unconscious.

Besides, having a strong ego-complex is what allows you to have self-confidence, motivation, and a sense of direction. The *individuation process* only occurs when the conscious mind directs the process. That said, the notion of building a healthy ego is so central to Jung that he divides our lives into two stages with two different goals: “As a rule, the life of a young person is characterized by a general expansion and a striving towards concrete ends; and his neurosis seems mainly to rest on his hesitation or shrinking back from this necessity. But the life of an older person is characterized by a contraction of forces, by the affirmation of what has been achieved, and by the curtailment of further growth. His neurosis comes mainly from his clinging to a youthful attitude which is now out of season. Just as the young neurotic is afraid of life, so the older one shrinks back from death. What was a normal goal for the young man becomes a neurotic hindrance to the old—just as, through his hesitation to face the world, the young neurotic's originally normal dependence on his parents grows into an incest-relationship that is inimical to life. It is natural that neurosis, resistance, repression, transference, “guiding fictions,” and so forth should have one meaning in the young person and quite another in the old, despite apparent similarities. The aims of therapy should

undoubtedly be modified to meet this fact. Hence the age of the patient seems to me a most important indicium” (C.G. Jung – V16 – §75).

Returning to the context of spirituality, a great part of maturing is developing our relationship with the divine free from parental influence and childish beliefs. Atheism might be a valid position before religion but psychologically it's impossible. Let's remember that psychologically, God means *the highest value operative in a human soul* or the *imago Dei*. In other words, the foundation that shapes our lives and who we are. In the absence of a deeper meaning that guides us, the religious function of the psyche replaces it with something else.

When we hold childish views and don't actively strive to find or create this meaning, traumas become mighty gods, drugs control us, money and sex become our masters, codependency substitutes our relationship with the Self, and narcissism turns into a religion. In this light, Jung says that healing is a “religious problem” not because he wants to create a new religion but because only the *numinosum* can revitalize our souls and help us find meaning. Ultimately, we're free to choose our gods but remember that this decision shapes who we become. But we'll return to this discussion in the final chapters.

Finally, the *Puer Aternus* and *Puella Aeterna* tell the story of an unrealized potential and a half-lived life. Healing lies in facing reality and let go of their fantasies of being a misunderstood genius or a special snowflake, their internalized megalomania and sense of entitlement must be completely eradicated. Instead, they must learn to accept full responsibility for their actions and learn that everything has a price to be paid. Meaningful work and responsibility are the principles that can redeem their soul. Bringing their dreams to reality and fighting for them is what can revitalize their spirit. Realizing their potential and fulfilling their role as the child of the promise is what can bring meaning to their existence.

3.5 - Integrating The Shadow of The Puer Aeternus

After reading the first part, perhaps you're thinking that I'm a hardcore fan of the hustle culture and that you'll have to sell your soul to “the system” if you ever want to get better. Well, I wouldn't blame you if that's the impression you got, especially since Carl Jung and Von Franz used to say that the cure for the *Puer Aeternus* and *Puella Aeterna* is hard work. That's why a crucial

distinction must be made between mere work and *meaningful work*. To accomplish that, I'd like to bring the concept of Resistance, coined by Steven Pressfield in his amazing book *The War of Art*. Pressfield says that Resistance, with a capital R, is the enemy within and is in direct proportion to how important the task is for the development of our souls.

In other words, the cure isn't mindlessly working but moving in the direction of our fears and putting our talents in service of something greater than ourselves. Accepting this task is always terrifying as it puts us in a vulnerable position and it demands our fullest devotion. Resistance always shows its hideous face when we're about to accomplish something great. That's why it's easy to know when we're on the right path because when we refuse this calling, we feel like a part of us is dying. Conversely, when we're fully engaged in this mission, every cell of our being awakens.

In that sense, meaning lies in embracing the responsibility of developing our talents and being in service of other people. Now, this is no easy task, and accepting this calling puts us in a direct confrontation with the *shadow* of the *Puer Aeternus*. A negative mother complex always evokes a constant search for comfort and a bad relationship with matter. Since the *Puer* is constantly choosing their fantasies over reality, in a general sense, his biggest *shadow* is the body and the practical aspects of life. That's why nothing can be solved intellectually, we must take action and get our hands dirty. In this light, the good enough parent is the one who is capable of frustrating childish illusions and helping their kid accept and adapt to the real world. That's exactly what we have to do for ourselves.

Healing Is A Construction

As I said in the previous chapter, few people understand that healing is a construction and not a single moment in time. Moreover, Jung states that time is an irreplaceable factor for healing. For some weird reason, we as human beings have a hard time grasping this notion. I notice this with my clients very frequently, there comes a point in which they're experiencing themselves differently. Most of their anxiety and depressive feelings are gone, and they're feeling more confident and motivated to give life to their projects.

I always ask them what changed and I confess that by now this is kinda of a tricky question. All of them tend to attribute these changes to a single moment. They say that something happened in their workplace, they finally had a tough conversation with their partners, or even that “one day they just woke up differently”. By now, I’m already used to these replies and this is the moment I do the best I can to show them that there was a build-up leading to this moment. I emphasize that all of those tiny seemingly insignificant actions finally paid off.

This realization is crucial to evoke a sense of agency. With that, they finally understand that they’re not subject to external events, they’re now in control and can perpetuate this new state. The truth is that what truly works isn’t sexy. The real magic lies in what we usually neglect, our mundane daily actions and choices. In this light, it’s only possible to craft a new sense of identity by backing it up with actions. You need concrete proof. Every time you experiment yourself differently, you’re beating Resistance and solidifying a new version of yourself.

You create momentum for your mind to shift every time you decide to go to the gym and eat healthier, when you say no to a toxic family member, or when you work on your projects instead of doom-scrolling and watching adult videos. You choose to change today and when you least expect, you’re doing it effortlessly because this is the new you. Every tiny action matters, that’s why the healing process is quite simple to understand, however, it evidently requires effort and discipline.

That said, the only way to break free from the spell of neurosis is to face our fears. The main key to accomplishing that is reconnecting with the body, which in turn anchors us in reality. When we address the obstacles that are right in front of us, we finally stop resorting to fantasies and build important skills to adapt to life. This takes us to a decisive point: Resistance only strikes to kill, and if we’re going to beat it, we must first build a solid foundation by developing a proper routine with healthy habits and fixing our environments. This is how we can practically integrate the *shadow* of the *Puer and Puella Aeternus*.

The Body As Shadow

It’s important to understand that the unconscious is projected upon the body and it directly influences our psychological state. That’s why it’s important to work on regulating our nervous

system which allows us to build tolerance and diminish negative emotions such as shame, rejection, and abandonment. We can accomplish that by deploying emotional regulation techniques. Amongst my favorites are meditation and Yoga Nidra, practicing felt sense awareness, journaling with automatic writing, creative expressions such as music, and of course, physical exercise and healthy eating.

Moreover, this work primes us to experience more positive emotions. According to Barbara Fredrickson, positive emotions amplify our creativity and learning capacity, make us envision new possibilities, boost our resilience, and allow us to bounce back from adversity more quickly. We feel more capable to face our fears and gain the necessary perspective to finally investigate our stories and patterns productively. Not only that but by transforming our bodies, we're also transforming our minds and generating a new attitude. To me, that's the real secret and where the magic happens.

Allow me to illustrate my point by sharing a personal story. Over 12 years ago when I used to pack an extra 25k (55 lbs) of pure fat, I was tired and sleepy all the time. Honestly, I felt disgusting when I looked myself in the mirror. I was weak and constantly avoiding the challenges of life. My attitude was to constantly do the least amount of work possible and never fully commit to anything. I was a passive spectator watching my life being wasted by playing video games, eating copious amounts of candy, and watching adult videos. Yeah, it wasn't a pretty sight.

When I was about 19, my family and I made our first international trip to visit my uncle in the USA. At the time, I was already extremely addicted to food, I just couldn't stop eating! I guess you can imagine how many burgers, pizzas, and ice cream I had during this trip. By the way, I still remember that obnoxious greasy brown bag from 5 guys. It was my favorite. A few days later after we got back, we went shopping for new clothes and I got my usual size, medium T-shirts and 42 on pants. When I went to try them on, they didn't fit. I looked myself in the mirror barely breathing and was overcome with shameful tears.

That was the first time I objectively understood I was slowly killing myself. I manage to suck it up, and I remember returning all the t-shirts and buying a bigger pair of pants. This experience changed me. I knew I had to do something not only about my health but life in general. That same week, I spent the little savings I had buying a set of dumbbells, a few weights, and a

bench. I started consuming every video I could find on bodybuilding and fell in love with it. I'd experiment with new things every week and I finally witnessed my body changing.

After dropping 25 kg I wasn't the same guy anymore. I learned to rely on myself, I knew I could have goals and achieve them. I knew I was capable. Those sets of weights saved my life and I mean it. Many people preach that we should accept ourselves the way we are and be completely passive about it, but I disagree entirely. When we truly love ourselves we do everything we can to change and we hold ourselves to the highest standards. Not because we're punishing ourselves, but because we know we're capable of more and we want to achieve our potential.

That's why the easiest way to change our sense of identity is by focusing on creating new behaviors. The more we accumulate concrete proof, the more we experience our identity shifting. As a client of mine says, we have to build our "bank of evidence". Every time I picked my dumbbells I was affirming to myself that I was strong, focused, and disciplined. After 6 months this became my new reality because I experienced it deeply in my body. People think they have to be motivated or enter the right mindset to change, but it's the other way around. You first do the thing and your mind will begin shifting accordingly. You need to experiment yourself differently so your mind can change.

In this light, the body is the symbolic vehicle for learning how to mature psychologically. By engaging in some form of physical activity, we learn how to go all in and build perseverance. We can change our relationship with pain by realizing it's a vital part of the process. There isn't progress without struggle and nothing truly valuable just falls on our laps, we must conquer it. The *Puer* has the tendency to compensate for his lack of action and results by indulging in megalomaniac fantasies, but by working on fully being in our bodies, we can learn to be present and focused. Moreover, the *Puer* learns to address what's right in front of him and slowly builds on it. This commitment allows him to finally overcome the *provisional life* and develop long-term thinking.

Once I heard that the attitude you have about one thing is how you tend to do everything. In other words, if you're lazy and permissive when it comes to taking care of yourself and your body, this bleeds into your work and relationships. In that sense, I learned that self-esteem is acquired by first honoring the agreements we make with ourselves and second, by giving life to our repressed

qualities and desires. We already addressed the latter in previous chapters, so I'll focus on the first part now.

One of the easiest ways to see this process is in our relationship with food, that's why I encourage all of my clients to track their calories. This forces us to be more mindful, make better decisions, confront our urges, and place boundaries on ourselves. The paradox is that the more discipline we have the more freedom we experience. Paraphrasing Kant, you're only free when you choose to do what you don't want to do. Moreover, the more we're attuned to our bodies the less we experience compulsions and finally create a healthy relationship with pleasure. The boundaries we must place in our relationships always start with ourselves, we shouldn't expect the respect of others if we don't respect ourselves first. The more we honor these commitments, the greater our self-esteem.

In a deeper sense, the body symbolizes Eros and our commitment to fully engaging with life. Being in our bodies involves accepting our human limitations, it humbles us, and we're brought down to earth. Moreover, saying yes to life ceases the longing for the eternal mother and self-destructing behaviors. We're finally attuned to the intelligence of our primal instinctual forces. In conclusion, the psychological obstacles we must overcome always appear in our mundane activities such as choosing what to eat, not procrastinating on our tasks, or going to the gym. By addressing them, we're directly shifting our minds, transforming our *conscious attitude*, and integrating our shadows.

Finally, to beat Resistance and create an audacious life, we must stop the bleeding first by reconnecting with our bodies and focusing on the practical aspects of life. Realistically, it takes six to twelve months to build a strong foundation. But don't get discouraged and skip the first step because if you do this right, these are skills that will last for a lifetime. Once we've built this solid foundation, we naturally feel more motivated and our authentic interests and desires come to the surface. This takes us to the next step, *meaningful work*.

3.6 - The Prevailing Cure For The Puer Aeternus

Since I can remember, I have wanted to be good at something. I wanted to find that one thing I could feel was mine, something I could master and share with others. Not everyone has this void, but I certainly did. This longing made me start many different endeavors, but my belief in myself was so low that I could never stick with anything long enough to truly develop myself. I remember this period, it must have been 5th or 6th grade, in which the whole school was extremely engaged with football. Every PE class felt like a championship and I was unexpectedly good at being a goalkeeper. People would fight for me and for a fat clumsy kid, this was surreal.

This was the first moment I remember feeling appreciated. In this same period, I asked my parents to enroll me in a proper football school. I remember being so excited but unfortunately, this only lasted a couple of months. Soon after I got in, I broke a toe and had to stop entirely. I can't say exactly why, but I never came back. Maybe I felt it wasn't for me or my childish mind wasn't strong enough to persist. At 32, I have a better understanding. I know I was after the feeling of being good at something rather than becoming an athlete.

I still love doing sports but my natural abilities aren't in this area. I was always meant to understand the mysteries of the psyche and translate them into an accessible language to others, but this only became crystal clear to me about 4 years ago. I used to be extremely indecisive. I started college at 17 and I studied business for a semester, which is honestly laughable. The mere thought of working in a company gives me crippling anxiety. Then I switched to marketing and I did that for a whole year. It was better but still meaningless. What made my heart beat faster was music, but again, I was afraid to pursue it. Resistance took the best of me until in a surge of courage and inspiration, I decided to enroll in music school.

This was the first important decision I ever made in my life because it represents the first step in my individuation journey and separation from my parents. With this decision, I experienced a new vitality that affected everything. This was the moment I bought my precarious but invaluable home gym, and my depression and anxiety finally started fading. Music was the first thing I ever took seriously in my life and I was willing to do whatever it took to become good at it. I'd practice hours and hours every day and this brought meaning and direction to my life.

I didn't know at the time, but these were my first experiences with the flow state, one of the keys to living a meaningful life and a powerful antidote to other people's judgments and opinions. When you find something that demands skill and you can do it for hours regardless of external pressure, you may have found a gift. You see, people think that achieving meaning is something static, like a final destination. This may have a philosophical value but in practice, I believe meaning lies in being fully immersed in something deeply valuable and putting it in service of other people. It's internal and external and selfish and selfless at the same time.

In my experience as a therapist, 99% of people know exactly what they want to do with their lives. The problem is always fear. Maybe they're afraid of disappointing their parents or facing the judgment of other people. Maybe they're afraid of failure and don't feel confident in their abilities. Or maybe, they're afraid of being vulnerable and following their souls. However, it's only on this sacred path that you can feel truly fulfilled. That's why the first key to creating meaning and unlocking the flow state is deeply caring about something. You must allow yourself to be fully affected by it. Most people feel lost and succumb to nihilism because they avoid this responsibility, after all once you care about something this immediately puts you in a vulnerable position.

Suddenly, the stakes are high, you have skin in the game, and you know that everything depends on you. The excuses you had are gone, either you act on it or you'll continue to feel anxious and depressed. Being in this position is exactly what triggers the flow state, and this is the moment you feel truly alive and start being driven by purpose. When you commit to exploring your potential and authentic desires you can tap into an endless source of motivation. When you're guided by something greater than you, work doesn't feel like work and you unlock an effortless state. Instead of being guided by fear and avoiding mistakes, you suddenly find yourself being sustained by inspiration. This may sound a bit "woo-woo" but my poetic argumentation is backed by neuroscience and the positive psychology field.

The Flow State

Martin Seligmann, in his book *Authentic Happiness*, explores three types of happiness. The first one is the Pleasant Life. It consists of maximizing pleasant bodily sensations like eating a great Italian pasta accompanied by a pretentious glass of Pinot Noir. It's undeniable that's important to learn how to enjoy these moments. As they say in Argentina, "Disfrutar la buena comida". But we

also know that these moments are very fleeting and devoting a life to seeking pleasure quickly becomes poisonous to the body and soul.

The second kind of happiness is the Good Life or Engaged Life. This layer consists of exploring our potential and cultivating our virtues and strengths. It's directly linked with experiencing the flow state or being "In the zone". This state allows you to be fully immersed in an activity that's deeply pleasurable and rewarding. It is *autotelic*, in other words, the enjoyment of the activity itself is the payoff*. That's why flow is the secret to unleashing intrinsic motivation.

Finally, the third layer of happiness is the Meaningful Life. This last dimension evokes a sense of meaning and purpose. This happens the moment we put our talents in service of others and the higher good. This unlocks a new layer of the human experience and a deeper sense of lasting fulfillment. Now, if you've been paying attention, the secret lies in learning to unlock the flow state as the third layer is dependent on that. Flow is a concept created by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and he describes it as a state of complete absorption in an *autotelic* activity, in which the challenges perfectly match the individual's skill.

However, recent research discovered that true flow only occurs when the skills and the challenges are high. That's why people who experience this state are constantly pushing their boundaries since the better you get the more you're rewarded with flow. Moreover, experiencing flow has incredible benefits, some even feel made up, such as boosting our productivity by 500% without feeling burnt out, and tremendously enhancing our creativity and learning capacities. Here's a list of benefits from *The Rise of Superman* by Steven Kotler, the most respected researcher in the field:

- A heightened sense of engagement, enjoyment, and satisfaction.
- Improved emotional regulation and a reduction in negative emotions such as worry, self-doubt, and fear.
- Intense focus and concentration that helps prevent the intrusion of negative or distressing thoughts.

- A release of pent-up emotions, especially when engaging in activities that involve physical movement or creative expression.
- Steady levels of motivation.
- Boosted self-confidence and self-efficacy.
- An improved overall mood and sense of well-being.

These benefits alone are incredible but experiencing flow can be a lot more profound. In fact, flow used to be studied as religious experiences by the psychologist William James, as peak experiences by Abraham Maslow, and finally, as numinous experiences by Carl Jung. We'll cover that in the chapter about archetypes but the description of religious and flow experiences perfectly align with one another, such as experiencing time dilation, being fully present, and a sensation that you're merging with external elements and even other people.

This happens especially in creative settings, in which we feel like a higher force is guiding us and we're a channel translating the messages of the creative spirit. When you're playing music, you suddenly feel one with your instrument, it's as if your hands are moving by themselves and you're transported to another plane. When you're doing sports, your senses are heightened, you're more agile and can predict everybody's movements. In flow, you're more creative and always find new connections and unexpected answers. As Steven Kotler says, flow allows real magic to happen. Every time you experience this state, you feel more alive, inspired, and complete. Moreover, flow can potentially give us a sense of meaning and purpose when shared with others..

As you can see, religious experiences aren't limited to traditional religious settings, they happen especially when we're fully committed to mastering a craft. That's why the traditional advice of “follow your passions” is simultaneously great and terrible advice. First, it's great because our passions often uncover fields in which we're more prone to experiencing flow. But it's also terrible because experiencing flow is dependent on mastering a craft. In other words, a sense of enjoyment only comes when you devote time to developing an ability. The better you get at something, the more fulfillment and motivation you experience.

Creating Meaning

Now, I've encountered many people who claim to not have any talents and are disconnected from their true aspirations. In this case, I see two major tendencies. First, they're judging themselves through the wrong set of values and cultural standards, remember the life-script? Second, they don't want to bear any responsibilities and allow Resistance to win. Once more, this conceals a passive childish attitude that expects everything to just fall on their laps, and the infantile desire to be magically good at something without putting any effort. That's why it's important to break all illusions regarding talents because the *Puer* often thinks that God blessed certain individuals who are magically good in their fields.

The truth is that having a talent simply means that you have the potential to excel in something but you still have to put in the work. Some people even defend that the concept of talent is completely irrelevant and only hard work counts. My position is somewhere in the middle. I do believe that people have certain aptitudes but without dedication they are useless. For instance, I could apply all of my efforts to learning physics, but I'd never be as good as I am in psychology. That's why we must commit to developing a craft that's aligned with our natural tendencies and abilities. Once we do that, experiencing flow is simply a byproduct.

That's why it's important to challenge the unconscious scripts running our lives and uncover our true personalities. We do that by devoting time to exploring our true interests, giving life to our dormant abilities, and going our own way. We can only shift our values through concrete action. The next step is understanding how our crafts can enrich other people's lives and finally create meaning. To accomplish that, we have to explore what it truly means to be in service of other people because the *Puer* and *Puella Aeternus* have a great tendency to people-pleasing.

This gives them the illusion that they're always selflessly living for others. However, they fail to recognize that every action has an ulterior motive. They're “sacrificing” themselves because they always expect something in return. That's why every relationship is inauthentic and a mere transaction. But the harsh truth is that people-pleasing has a narcissistic core. An infantile ego makes you live in a realm of projections and makes you believe the world revolves around you and everyone must be at your disposal. However, to find meaning we must go beyond the ego, break free from selfish power pursuits, and be in service of the Self.

Now, this people-pleasing tendency has its roots in the external sense of self-worth we previously discussed, consequently, the *Puer* tends to be exclusively motivated by gaining the approval of others and external pressure. When it comes to his own projects, paralyzing perfectionism and procrastination usually win. By now, you already know this is part of his desire to remain childish and by passively relying on what other people expect of him, he can avoid the responsibility of creating his own life and making his own decisions. That's why the *Puer* must learn how to do things out of his own volition regardless of external pressure.

It's crucial to be decisive about how you want to live your life, take a stance, and stop being a hostage to other people's judgments and opinions. We already covered the first step which is reconnecting with the body and the practical aspects of life. But we can take things to the next level with the flow state since in flow, there isn't a final goal. We're not concerned with how good we look for others, we're doing it because it's pleasurable, deeply rewarding, and exploring our gifts is inspiring.

I often experience this state when I'm playing music, writing, or grinding in the gym. When I'm conducting therapy sessions, my sensibility is heightened and I know exactly what to say. But as I mentioned, we can only access the flow state when we deeply care about something and allow ourselves to be fully affected by it. When something has this level of importance in our lives suddenly, what other people think stops mattering so much. It's not that we stop caring completely nor should this be the goal. But when we have access to something so potent, what other people think becomes irrelevant.

We finally unlock intrinsic motivation and we're fueled by the desire to excel and constantly achieve new heights. We shift the external sense of self-worth to following what brings us joy, that's why flow is a powerful antidote to perfectionism and people-pleasing. Moreover, we fall in love with challenges and doing hard things because they expand who we are. As a client of mine once said, "Most people live comfortably miserable lives". That's why to find meaning, we must follow Resistance and put ourselves in situations that demand growth. We must give ourselves no other choice but to go all in. That's how we earn self-confidence, by choosing to do the hard thing and building our "bank of evidence".

Now, it's important to realize that flow can be experienced completely alone, like when you're grinding in the gym or running, or when you're expressing your creative potential. When we enter this state, profound shifts can happen and we access powerful internal resources that can be transported to other areas. Moreover, experiencing flow in one area primes you to experience this state in all other dimensions of your life. For instance, pushing your body to its limits or taking creative risks, allows you to do the same in your relationships or business.

That's why your flow activity and your profession can be completely separated from one another, but to experience true meaning, the expression of your talents must be attached to a vision and a bigger picture. Simply put, the more responsibility we accept, the more meaning we experience. Interestingly, the values of the soul are often in direct opposition to the image of perfection we want to project on the world since following our hearts always demands vulnerability. But when we're open to the Self, we feel like we're at the service of something transcendent, and what we do matters. When we're thinking about giving up, powerful synchronicities allow us to rise above our fears and persevere.

In reality, things aren't easier because we're following our authentic paths but by engaging with our souls, meaning is unraveled. But It's not something static, meaning is experienced within the relationship with the soul. Meaning has to be created ever anew with each step we take. "But I'm not ready!", you might be thinking. Steven Pressfield says we become ready in the process and I couldn't agree more. Each step we take prepares us for the next one. We're not supposed to see the finished whole. In Joseph Campbell's words: "If you can see your path laid out in front of you step by step, you know it's not your path. Your own path you make with every step you take. That's why it's your path". In conclusion, first, you need the courage to accept your authentic desires and gifts, once you find something valuable, you must commit to turning it into a craft. Finally, you put your talents in service of other people, in service of something greater than you, in service of the Self.

3.7 - The Invaluable Mission of The Puer Aeternus

In the beginning, I promised I'd reveal the invaluable mission of the *Puer and Puella Aeternus*. This exploration is crucial since most people assume this archetype is mostly negative and they must do whatever they can to slay it. Conversely, a few people believe they should never

fully grow up since they fear they'll lose their imagination and creativity. Both positions are unilateral, and the dual nature of the *Puer Aeternus* is misunderstood.

That said, what must be conquered is our childishness because once we mature, we can finally enjoy the hidden gifts brought by this archetype. The *Puer Aeternus* is the creative energy par excellence and every psychological process of transformation begins with it. This archetype bears the seeds of a new life. It's pure potential and its appearance brings unheard possibilities and uncharted pathways. When everything feels stuck and the *conscious attitude* has reached its limits, that's when the *Puer* energy is needed the most since it unlocks fresh perspectives that allow life to flow again. In other words, the *Puer* and *Puella Aeternus* have the invaluable mission to bring renewal and teach us to live creatively.

People under the influence of this archetype tend to always have one foot in the realm of the collective unconscious. This gives them a certain brightness, insightfulness, and unusual creativity. It's important to understand that this connection is only insidious when it's not rooted in reality. Because when this creative force isn't shaped and concretized, it rots. Consequently, the *Puer* falls prey to poisonous fantasies and wishful thinking and never accomplishes anything. However, when this creative impulse is paired with responsibility and adaptation to life, wonderful creations can flourish.

Moreover, when we mature, our productions evolve and finally stop being neurotic and a mere fruit of childish idealizations. We can finally master a craft and develop a more sincere, humble, and devoted attitude toward the creative spirit. By conquering our infantilism, we don't lose our imagination. The opposite happens, we free our creativity from frivolous pursuits and connect it to real life. That's why we're not supposed to murder this part of ourselves, we're supposed to educate it and keep our inner child alive. Otherwise, we succumb to one of the greatest enemies of shadow integration, *enantiodromia*. Instead of maturing, we repress these aspects entirely and become grumpy and disillusioned adults. We lose all of the invaluable gifts of this archetype and only experience it negatively.

Conversely, when we put effort into developing our talents and maturing our relationship with creativity, we can maintain a close connection with the *Self* and bring these gifts to our adult lives. That said, it's important to understand that the realm of creativity extends far beyond arts and

crafts. This isn't about painting or playing music, it's about adopting a new attitude that turns our existence into a living work of art. Maturing our sensibility to our creative impulses allows us to surpass convention and outdated values that imprison our souls.

When we're connected to the creative matrix of the unconscious, we dare to take risks, break paradigms, and revolutionize our professions. We can enrich our relationships by revealing more profound aspects of our personalities. In a deeper sense, we stop being determined by our past and envision new possibilities. We have the audacity to follow our souls, experience more joy and fulfillment, and accomplish what we're meant to do.

4 - Psychological Types Unraveled

In the second chapter, we explored Carl Jung's model of the *psyche* and I introduced you to *psychodynamics*. If you were paying attention, here's the moment of the truth, you'll remember that the most important concept in Jungian Psychology is *conscious attitude*. This is basically how a person is wired, their basic tendencies, and patterns of behavior. It's how one tends to interpret, filter, and react to the world. You can also add someone's beliefs, political views, philosophy of life, habits, and individual idiosyncrasies. The sum of these different components forms someone's *conscious attitude* and *cosmovision*.

However, behind all of these individual tendencies, Jung discovered a system that acts as a foundation for the *conscious attitude* and structures the psyche, namely the *psychological types*. Personally, I consider this method the ultimate compass for our psychological development. It can give us immense clarity about how to harmonize our strengths and weaknesses, and invaluable insights to navigate our relationships.

Before we start, I want to be clear that pure types don't exist, we'll be exploring basic patterns and tendencies and people will fall on a spectrum: "Naturally, they [*psychological types*] never occur, in reality, in their pure form, but always and only with individual variations derived from the principle that governs its appearance, similar to the crystals, which generally, are variants of the same system" (C. G. Jung - V8 - §221).

That said, you might have encountered several tests on the internet claiming to reveal your typology, but let me tell you that every time I see that I can hear Carl Jung rolling and agonizing in his grave. Since he isn't alive to protest, I'll try to explain why these tests are a scam. Firstly, typology isn't static, it evolves and changes as we mature psychologically and it isn't deterministic or characterological.

That is, it doesn't reveal personal qualities like being empathetic, confident, well-spoken, or a perfectionist and over-thinker. This is related to someone's psychological maturity, unique skills, and frankly, not being neurotic. Speaking of which, equating introversion to being shy and having social anxiety is just moronic. Also, the typological method doesn't reveal our destiny, relationship patterns, or our careers.

Moreover, a test would never be able to capture the complexity of the *psychodynamics* involved. People seldom have an objective perspective about themselves, and more often than not, they give answers that have nothing to do with their true personalities, as the unconscious and the *inferior function* are constantly interjecting. As aforementioned, what's possible is to delineate a few basic tendencies, knowing that people will express them in a plethora of ways. Time to explore these basic patterns.

4.1 - Introversion and Extroversion

The first component of the *psychological types* is introversion and extroversion: “[...] A habitual attitude in which one of the mechanisms will predominate, without, however, being able to completely suppress the other, as this is a necessary part of psychic activity. That is why there cannot be a pure type in the sense of having only one of the mechanisms [...] A typical attitude always and only means the relative predominance of one of the mechanisms” (C. G. Jung - V6 - §6).

The first thing we have to understand about introversion and extroversion is that this isn't static, it's fluid, and there isn't someone 100% introverted or extroverted all of the time. What we have is the relative predominance of one of the mechanisms. You probably heard people saying that they're generally introverted but extremely extroverted with people they know more intimately, that's why.

Also, we might experience certain periods in our lives where one of the mechanisms is more prevalent than the other. This doesn't make you an “ambivert”, as there's no such thing. Being an introvert or extrovert is a way of relating to and understanding the world, and the biggest difference lies in the relationship with objects.

As Von Franz says, “[...] In the extravert, the libido habitually flows consciously toward the object, but there is also an unconscious secret counteraction back toward the subject. For the extrovert, the hidden move toward the subject is usually an unconscious factor. In the case of the introvert, the opposite occurs, for he feels as if an object would constantly overwhelm him, so that he has to continually retire from it, for everything is falling upon him, he is constantly overwhelmed

by impressions, but he is unaware that he is secretly borrowing, or lending, psychic energy to the object through his own unconscious extraversion” (Marie Von Franz - Psychotherapy - p. 27).

Let's explore each one more in-depth, starting with extroversion: "Now, when orientation by the object predominates in such a way that decisions and actions are determined not by subjective views but by objective conditions, we speak of an extraverted attitude” (C. G. Jung - V6 - §563).

Extroverts have their attention directed to the external world and other people. They tend to be heavily influenced and shaped by their environment, culture, and collective opinions. To the point that if they were to be born in a different culture their personalities would easily be molded by it. For that reason, they tend to be socially adapted and have a collective way of thinking and behaving. They see the world as something empty, so they “lend” their *souls* to animate external objects. They think and feel outside themselves – “in the objects”.

As they're constantly seeking to affect and be affected, they find themselves in the changeable and tend to be more flexible and malleable. For that same reason, they lack inner conviction and have difficulty perceiving their own individuality, in extreme cases, they can completely lose their sense of self in the objects and their environment. Most extroverts have a deep fear of being alone and there's no solid core to sustain their convictions, as they can change their minds and emotional states at any given moment if they're affected by something external.

In contrast, Introverts have their attention primarily directed to their inner world: "Although the introverted consciousness is naturally aware of external conditions, it selects the subjective determinants as the decisive ones” (C. G. Jung - V6 - §621). This means that their ego and subjective opinions have a higher value than the external conditions, like their culture and environment. Introverts are constantly filtering the external reality interposed by their subjectivity, and seek to shield themselves from the external world and control it, instead of being absorbed by it like extroverts.

Moreover, introverts seek to be constant and tend to be guided by a firm set of conscious or unconscious rules, which make them more rigid and inflexible. This is an attempt to always control

the outcome and protect themselves from *affects* and the influence of other people. In extreme cases, there's a constant worry about the future and agoraphobia.

Consequently, introverts tend to be socially awkward and find socializing draining. But they tend to have a rich inner life, conviction, and a sense of separation from the collective. However, they need to be cautious to not turn this into empty individualism and ego-centrism, by disregarding the outside world and constructing a shallow antagonistic character that secretly believes in being better than everyone.

4.2 - The Four Functions

The second layer of the *psychological types* is the four functions: "Consciousness is primarily an organ of orientation in a world of outer and inner facts. First and foremost, it establishes the fact that something is there. I call this faculty *sensation*. By this I do not mean the specific activity of any one of the senses, but perception in general. Another faculty interprets what is perceived; this I call *thinking*. By means of this function, the object perceived is assimilated and its transformation into a psychic content proceeds much further than in mere sensation. A third faculty establishes the value of the object. This function of evaluation I call *feeling*. The pain-pleasure reaction of feeling marks the highest degree of subjectivation of the object. Feeling brings subject and object into such a close relationship that the subject must choose between acceptance and rejection" (C. G. Jung - V8 - §256).

Jung continues, "These three functions would be quite sufficient for orientation if the object in question were isolated in space and time. But, in space, every object is in endless connection with a multiplicity of other objects; and, in time, the object represents merely a transition from a former state to a succeeding one. Most of the spatial relationships and temporal changes are unavoidably unconscious at the moment of orientation, and yet, in order to determine the meaning of an object, space-time relationships are necessary. It is the fourth faculty of consciousness, *intuition*, which makes possible, at least approximately, the determination of space-time relationships. This is a function of perception which includes subliminal factors, that is, the possible relationship to objects not appearing in the field of vision, and the possible changes, past and future, about which the object gives no clue. Intuition is an immediate awareness of relationships that could not be established by the other three functions at the moment of orientation" (C. G. Jung - V8 - §257).

The four functions also make two pairs of opposites: *thinking* and *feeling*, and *sensation* and *intuition*. Consciousness tends to be guided by only one of these functions, which is called the *main function*. Moreover, for the *main function* to be adaptative, it has to suppress its counterpart, which in turn remains unconscious. Under this light, there will be *thinking types*, *feeling types*, *intuitive types*, and *sensation types*.

Now, let's explore each function individually. First, *thinking* tends to be logical, rational, and processual. It tells us *what a thing is* and adds concepts and ideas, through a process of comparison. Thinking tends to be detached, neutral, and cold, as It sees every object with equal value.

In contrast, *feeling* tells us the worth and value of something and that's why it's contrary to *thinking*. It places judgments if you like or dislike something and if it's acceptable or not. It adds "color", nuances, and adjectives to the objects. The *feeling* function is deeply personal and tends to create relationships with the objects. It gives you the ability to perceive the emotional atmosphere and understand your own feelings and those of others. It's the main function used in connecting with other people and establishing relationships.

Here, it's important to make a distinction, the *feeling function* isn't equal to experiencing emotions and affects. Jung says "The differences would be this: *feeling* has no physical or tangible physiological manifestations, while emotion (*affects*) is characterized by an altered physiological condition" (C. G. Jung - V18.1 - §46). Therefore, when you experience a deep overwhelming emotion you're not "in" your *feeling function*, you're simply having an *affect*. The *feeling function* is the conscious experience of an emotion and it's subject to the conscious will.

Now let's discuss the second pair of opposites. Sensation is the function of reality and provides the perception of the physical stimulus, both externally and internally. It's the awareness of everything we can perceive with the five senses. It's detail-oriented, grounded in reality, and in the present moment.

In contrast, *intuition* is the closest function to the unconscious and that's why it often adopts a metaphorical and symbolic manifestation. It tends to present itself in images to the conscious mind or a certain hunch or gut feeling. It's contrary to *sensation* because it's future-oriented, it sees

the potential of objects and what they can become. Intuition sees things as a finished whole instead of small details, and it's a form of perception via unconscious.

Time to apply what we've learned with a simple example, don't take this too seriously. Let's imagine you're talking with someone, a *thinking type* will pay attention to the words, their logical sequence, and if things make sense from a rational standpoint. A *feeling type* will be able to perceive through the words and apprehend the emotional atmosphere and true intentions behind what's being said.

Now, a *sensation type* will pay attention to their subtle gestures, their clothes, tone of voice, and micro-expressions, and this will give them the information they need. Lastly, an *intuitive type* might have a certain hunch or gut feeling about the person and immediately know if they can be good friends or not. They can also perceive images in their minds while they're interacting that contain crucial information about the development of the conversation.

Finally, If we pair the extroverted and introverted tendencies with one of the four functions we get the *eight psychological types*. Each one of the four functions acquires different manifestations according to a more introverted or extroverted nature, giving each type unique traits and tendencies:

- Extroverted or Introverted Thinking Type.
- Extroverted or Introverted Feeling Type.
- Extroverted or Introverted Sensation Type.
- Extroverted or Introverted Intuition Type.

4.3 - The Inferior Function

Lastly, we'll discuss the *inferior function*, one of the main secrets of the *individuation process*. Von Franz says the *inferior function* "Is the ever-bleeding wound of the conscious personality, but through it the unconscious can always come in and so enlarge consciousness and bring forth new experience. As long as you have not developed your other functions, your auxiliary functions, they too will be open doors, so in a person who has only developed one superior function, the two auxiliary functions will operate in the same way and will appear in personifications of the *shadow*, *animus*, and *anima*. It is only when you have succeeded in developing three functions, in locking three of your inner doors, that the problem of the fourth door still remains, for that is the one which is apparently not meant to be locked. There one has to succumb, one has to suffer defeat, in order to develop further" (Marie Von Franz - Psychotherapy - p. 99).

The problem of the *inferior function* is incredibly complex. Theoretically, Carl Jung established that the development of the personality revolves around the four functions. First, we should develop our *main function*, then we should develop one *auxiliary function* from the other pair of opposites. As a third step, we should develop the counterpart of the auxiliary function, and finally touch the *inferior function*.

To exemplify, in my case, being an *introverted intuitive type*, I should develop my *intuition*, then *thinking* or *feeling* as an auxiliary one, in my case, it's *thinking*. As a third step I should develop *feeling*, and finally touch on my *inferior sensation*. I know this is wildly abstract but this method is incredibly helpful in the therapeutic setting.

Turning things a bit more practical, let's remember that everything that's incompatible with our *conscious attitude* will form our *shadow*, and when we're guided by one of the functions, its counterpart will invariably be repressed and remain unconscious, becoming our *inferior function*. If you're guided by *thinking*, your *inferior function* will be *feeling*, and vice-versa, if you're guided by *intuition*, your *inferior function* will be *sensation*, and vice-versa. The same thing is valid for *introversion* and *extroversion*.

In this light, one of the main components of our *shadow* is our *inferior function*, and its expression tends to be very slow and awkward, it's not subject to the conscious will, and frequently emerges explosively and uncontrollably. In the book *Psychotherapy*, Marie Von Franz brings an interesting point saying that the *inferior function* is usually projected on the body and summarizes everything with one simple question: "What is hell for you?" The answer might lead you straight to your *inferior function*.

But as with everything in Jungian Psychology, the *inferior function* has a paradoxical nature, as it contains the inner gold and the seeds to enlarge our personality. It's when we're engaging with the *inferior function* that we find the most joy and sense of wholeness. It's the source of our creativity and inspiration and it contains the wisdom we need to solve our conflicts and further our individuation journey. Lastly, Jung says that the technical term for the *animus* and *anima* is the *inferior function*, however, we tend to find them personified, making the *animus* and *anima* the empirical observation of the *inferior function*.

In conclusion, we'll have a *main function* which is the primary guide of our *conscious attitude* and we can also develop an *auxiliary function*, both introverted or extroverted, according to our tendencies. For instance, I'm an introvert with *intuition* as a *main function* and *thinking* as an *auxiliary function*. Therefore *extroverted sensation* is my *inferior function* and *extroverted feeling* is also felt as a weak spot.

Finally, If you can't relate to any of this, perhaps you're just not aware of your own tendencies or you're a *distorted type*. This is very common and happens when someone can't properly develop their *main function*. For instance, picture a *feeling/ intuitive type* with a strong creative and artistic personality, but he was raised by a family of engineers and dry intellectuals who suppressed any display of emotion, affection, spontaneity, or creativity. As a result this person never developed their main capacity and had to adapt with a function that's their weak spot. This will generate all sorts of issues and feelings of inadequacy, and the solution lies in developing their original *main function*.

5. Archetypes

Before we discuss the *animus* and *anima*, it's imperative to have clarity about the concept of *archetypes*. It took me about two years of reading Jung daily and a decent experience with active imagination to fully grasp this idea. But what actually inspired me to write this section was witnessing Argentina winning the World Cup (2022). As a Brazilian living in Buenos Aires, this experience was utterly astonishing. I'll begin by introducing the concepts and tying up everything in the end.

Let's begin with a footnote from *Archetypes and The Collective Unconscious*, "To the best of my knowledge, no other suggestions have been made so far. Critics have contented themselves with asserting that no such archetypes exist. Certainly they do not exist, any more than a botanical system exists in nature! But will anyone deny the existence of natural plant-families on that account? Or will anyone deny the occurrence and continual repetition of certain morphological and functional similarities? It is much the same thing in principle with the typical figures of the unconscious. They are forms existing *a priori*, or biological norms of psychic activity" (C. G. Jung - V9.1 – p. 646).

The first thing we have to realize is that *archetypes* don't physically exist, they're actually an organizing principle and exist as a potential to experience something psychologically and physiologically in a similar and definite way. In that sense, *archetypes* are like a blueprint, a structure, or a pattern, and all four psychological functions are required to apprehend it, as *archetypes* will evoke a typical thought pattern, a definite set of emotions, typical physical sensations, and symbolic representations.

5.1 - The Image of Instincts

Archetypes will also elicit patterns of behavior as they are an imagetic representation of instinctual patterns, making *archetypes* the psychic image of human instincts. In *Structures and Dynamics of The Psyche*, Jung places both on a spectrum, where instincts are represented by the infra-red part and *archetypes* by the ultraviolet part. Using a nerdy analogy, instincts are the hardware of a computer and *archetypes* are the software, and together they form the "Human Operational System". This analogy doesn't perfectly match what Jung meant but it helps to grasp it.

Moreover, being influenced by Kant, Jung disregards the notion that humans are a "*tabula rasa* to be marked by experience", and **establishes that *archetypes* are forms existing *a priori* (or beforehand) exactly because they aren't learned but inherited. Archetypes act as a filter to our human experience, therefore, humans have similar patterns of behavior, a similar thought structure, a similar way of experiencing emotions, physical sensations, and common symbolic representations.

Jung explains "There are, in fact, no amorphous instincts, as every instinct bears in itself the pattern of its situation. Always it fulfills an image, and the image has fixed qualities. The instinct of the leaf-cutting ant fulfills the image of ant, tree, leaf, cutting, transport, and the little ant-garden of fungi. If any one of these conditions is lacking, the instinct does not function, because it cannot exist without its total pattern, without its image. Such an image is an *a priori* type. It is inborn in the ant prior to any activity, for there can be no activity at all unless an instinct of corresponding pattern initiates and makes it possible. This schema holds true of all instincts and is found in identical form in all individuals of the same species. The same is true also of man: he has in him these *a priori* instinct-types which provide the occasion and the pattern for his activities, in so far as he functions instinctively. As a biological being he has no choice but to act in a specifically human way and fulfill his pattern of behaviour. This sets narrow limits to his possible range of volition, the more narrow the more primitive he is, and the more his consciousness is dependent upon the instinctual sphere. [...] We may say that the image represents the *meaning* of the instinct" (C. G. Jung - V8 – §398).

- **Instincts:** "Instincts are typical modes of action, and wherever we meet with uniform and regularly recurring modes of action and reaction we are dealing with instinct, no matter whether it is associated with a conscious motive or not" (C. G. Jung - V8 – §273).

Examples: Hunger, sexuality, reflection, and creativity.

- **Archetypes:** "Archetypes are typical modes of apprehension, and wherever we meet with uniform and regularly recurring modes of apprehension we are dealing with an archetype, no matter whether its mythological character is recognized or not" (C. G. Jung - V8 – §280).

5.2 - Archetypal Images

Now we have to discuss the difference between *archetypes* and archetypal images as this is usually where confusion starts and opens precedents for the wildest things. Remember that *archetypes* don't exist, their true nature is actually irrepresentable, that's why Jung refers to them as *psychoid*. What our conscious mind can perceive is a set of ideas and images that allude to this organizing principle.

A great example is the Tarot cards, as they aren't *archetypes* but their symbols can allude to one. Furthermore, *archetypes* lie in the unconscious realm, which means that they're not accessible to our conscious mind and aren't subject to our will, we can simply perceive them. That's why things like learning to "activate archetypes" or "using their energy" are simply a scam. Also, there aren't a definite number of *archetypes*, as they are as infinite as human experience can be.

A note on its *psychoid* nature: "The archetype as such is a psychoid factor that belongs, as it were, to the invisible, ultraviolet end of the psychic spectrum. It does not appear, in itself, to be capable of reaching consciousness. [...] Since other archetypes give rise to similar doubts, it seems to me probable that the real nature of the archetype is not capable of being made conscious, that it is transcendent, on which account I call it psychoid. Moreover every archetype, when represented to the mind, is already conscious and therefore differs to an indeterminable extent from that which caused the representation. [...] We must, however, constantly bear in mind that what we mean by "archetype" is in itself irrepresentable, but has effects which make visualizations of it possible, namely, the archetypal images and ideas" (C. G. Jung - V8 – §417). Lastly, "Archetypes are typical forms of behaviour which, once they become conscious, naturally present themselves *as ideas and images*, like everything else that becomes a content of consciousness" (C. G. Jung - V8 – §435).

5.3 - Religious Experiences

Archetypes are also responsible for religious experiences, which means they have a *numinous* (compulsive) quality and force themselves upon consciousness when constellated. To Jung, "Religion, as the Latin word denotes, is a careful and scrupulous observation of what Rudolf Otto aptly termed the *numinosum*, that is, a dynamic agency or effect not caused by an arbitrary act of will. On the contrary, it seizes and controls the human subject, who is always rather its victim

than its creator. The *numinosum* —whatever its cause may be—is an experience of the subject independent of his will. At all events, religious teaching as well as the *consensus gentium* always and everywhere explain this experience as being due to a cause external to the individual. The *numinosum* is either a quality belonging to a visible object or the influence of an invisible presence that causes a peculiar alteration of consciousness. This is, at any rate, the general rule” (C. G. Jung - V11 – §6).

Whenever we’re experiencing an archetypal situation, a definite set of thoughts, emotions, sensations, and fantasies will arise, all with a compulsive quality, evoking the feeling that we’re hostages to this overwhelming experience. For instance, the rapturous feeling of falling in love and all the ludicrous displays that come with it, all the arduous challenges we face in the transition from childhood to adulthood, how the first sexual encounter changes someone forever, or even the experience of parenthood or the death of a beloved one.

Moreover, an archetypal situation is also a living thing that places us inside a drama, with certain characters, obstacles, conflicts, and decisions. An *archetype* is attached to a definite narrative and evokes a storyline, with a beginning, its *peripeteia*, and a culmination. Like the great temptation Jesus had to endure for forty days in the desert, or when we feel tempted by a *femme fatale* or Don Juan figure, or even when we feel completely torn in the face of a tough decision.

All of these motifs are typically human, and although each person has a unique experience, they're all encapsulated in a definite structure. Here are a few examples of *archetypes*:

- The Idea of God or “the first cause” shaped all religions as every single one of them has a creation myth that seeks to explain the birth of the Universe and all species.
- The Mother, Father, Child, Shaman, Wise old Man and Woman.
- Mythological Motifs: The hero's journey, the magical escape, descending to hell (*Katabasis*), helping animals, metamorphosis, the treasure hardly attained, the cave and the dragon, the guardian of the threshold, and the *psychopomps* (usually linked to the *animus* and *anima*).

Lionel Messi As The Messiah

Lastly, I want to exemplify the action and appearance of *archetypes*. Being born in the country of football you must think that I've witnessed everything there's to see about it. Well, I thought that too. Until the World Cup of 2022 started and I constantly heard Lionel Messi being referred to as "Messi – The Messiah".

It's important to remember that an *archetype* is amorphous and only takes a definite form and fixed qualities when it's projected. What's interesting is that a projection happens via a *projective hook*, i.e., the receiver has to bear at least a resemblance to that image. For instance, you can't project an inner tyrant if the person in question isn't minimally sure of himself and isn't perceived with some degree of authority.

Now, the Christ or savior archetype can also overlap with the Divine Child or the Child of Promise, and they always have to fight against evil destructive forces upon their birth, and they're always rescued by a miracle. This happened with Jesus of Nazareth and also with a few fictional characters like Naruto and Harry Potter.

If you research, you'll learn that at the age of 11 Lionel Messi was diagnosed with a rare disease called Growth Hormone Disorder. This condition doesn't allow the body to grow naturally. That's why at the age of twelve, Messi had to inject growth hormones into his leg every night. However, the cost of the treatment was too high, and his family was struggling to continue to afford the hormone injections. At this time, FC Barcelona came to Messi's rescue, and the 13-year-old boy was offered a spot in their team and sponsored his medical expenses.

All of this can be completely random, so don't take this with absolute seriousness, but I find these similarities fascinating. You must also know that Argentina once was one of the richest countries on earth but now they're experiencing their darkest economic times. I'm witnessing protests every single week and the country is extremely polarized, what an auspicious moment for a savior to come.

Also, It's astonishing how football occupied the place of religion in Argentina and the power it acquired to unite people. Thereby, the savior is the one who can unify the opposites, bring peace, and end every battle. It's the one that can set us free and allow us to be happy, to celebrate, to be in communion with our neighbors, and evoke a sublime feeling that lifts our spirit. Here it comes Messi – The Messiah, a brilliant player who can grant us this grace.

But just as with every savior, Messi didn't have it easy. Argentinians only truly recognized him as an idol in this very World Cup. Perhaps another similarity with the motif of "rejecting the savior". However, at this moment, Argentinians are collectively projecting the savior image upon Messi, which prompts them to have their religious experience.

In the exact same way people feel saved by Christ (or any other religious personality), they felt saved by Messi. In every single game, there were people in the streets celebrating as if they had won the World Cup until they reached the finals, and their dream finally came true. Chills! Witnessing all of this happening at a five-minute walk from the city center – "The Obelisco" – was one of the craziest experiences of my life, and I feel extremely lucky to be a part of it.

6 - Eros and Logos - The Hierogamos

Now that we've covered *archetypes*, we can finally explore the *animus* and *anima*. For this section, I'd like to express my gratitude to my teacher Fernando Rodrigues who unlocked my understanding of the Eros and Logos as this allowed me to organize my knowledge and add my own experience.

The first thing we have to get out of the way is that when we're discussing these concepts we're not discussing gender. We can't equate *anima* with women and *animus* with men. As we've seen, Jung had an empirical approach, this means that he didn't invent these concepts out of nowhere, rather he found these archetypal images following the comparative method after studying a plethora of myths, religions, cultures, and dreams. He never stated how a man or woman should be, this would be just ridiculous. Archetypes transcend the personal and individual level, and of course gender.

Before we discuss the *animus* and *anima* we have to explore the concepts of Eros and Logos, because they're the generating archetypal principles of the *animus* and *anima*. Jung "Regarded both concepts as intuitive ideas which cannot be defined accurately or exhaustively. From the scientific point of view this is regrettable, but from a practical one it has its value, since the two concepts mark out a field of experience which it is equally difficult to define" (C. G. Jung - V14 – §223).

These concepts cannot be grasped solely intellectually, as about half of the experience with the unconscious can be translated into words and theory, and the other half has to be lived and embodied. That's why knowledge of myths and symbols, and real experience are essential to fully understand it. That said, I'll do my best to explain these ideas and point you in the right direction so you can build your own understanding.

In the *Red Book*, Jung gives us an interesting description of these intuitive ideas, "A descendent of Logos is Nous, the intellect, which has done away with the commingling of feeling, presentiment, and sensation. In contrast, the Logos contains this commingling. But it is not the product of such blending, or else it would be a lower animalistic psychic activity; yet it masters the blend, so that the four fundamental activities of the soul become subordinate to its principle. It is an

independent principle of form that means understanding, insight, foresight, legislation, and wisdom. The figure of an old prophet is therefore a fitting allegory for this principle, since the prophetic spirit unites in itself all these qualities. In contrast, Eros is a principle that contains a commingling of all the fundamental activities of the soul just as much as it masters them, although its purpose is completely different. It is not form-giving but form-fulfilling; it is the wine that will be poured into the vessel; it is not the bed and direction of the stream but the impetuous water flowing in it. Eros is desire, longing, force, exuberance, pleasure, suffering. Where Logos is ordering and insistence, Eros is dissolution and movement. They are two fundamental psychic powers that form a pair of opposites, each one requiring the other” (C. G. Jung - The Red Book, p. 365).

To simplify, Carl Jung immediately relates these archetypal principles with the Yin and Yang, where the extremes touch and convert into one another. They are the supreme pair of opposites that give the *psyche* its dynamism. Here I’ve made a chart with all the qualities I could find:

Eros:

- Yin – The dark, cold, and moist.
- The capacity to relate – Ambiguity.
- Personal.
- Lunar character – Irrationality – Chthonic – Nature.
- Openness – Receptiveness – Emptiness – Cyclical.
- Desire, longing, force, exuberance, pleasure, suffering, dissolution, and movement.

Logos:

- Yang – The light, warm, and dry.
- Discrimination – Judgment – Insight.
- Impersonal – Detached – Equal Dignity.
- Solar character – Rationality – Spiritual.
- The principle of will and action – Linear.
- Ordering, insistence, understanding, insight, foresight, legislation, and wisdom.

Although both principles contain the four functions as well as a union of conscious and unconscious qualities, for didactic purposes we can say that the Eros principle is more closely related to the irrational functions, namely *sensation*, and *intuition*. In contrast, Logos is more closely related to the rational functions, namely *thinking* and *feeling*. One common mistake is to equate Logos with the *thinking function* and Eros with *feeling*, but to Jung, the *feeling function* is also rational, as it operates with categories and a clear scale of values used to make judgments, otherwise, we only have dry and unfruitful rationalism.

Regarding Eros, it's important to understand that irrational means extra rational, in other words, it has a way of functioning distinct from the conscious mind as it obeys the laws of nature. While *thinking* and *feeling* have clear categories, such as good and evil, in the unconscious the lines are blurred. A physical sensation and the symbolic images that arise from the unconscious don't have any judgment attached to them, they're pure experience, as judgments always concern the conscious mind.

That's why Jung equates Logos with the Sun, as under its glaring light we can clearly see things separated from one another, and it's possible to categorize, judge, and discriminate. It sees

everything with equal dignity and from a position of detachment. Logos is also more closely related to the mechanism of introversion, since it creates impersonal abstractions and creates separations. As Jung says, Logos is what allows a scientist to have a "Religious concentration to the classification of lice, or to the different qualities of feces, to put it quite drastically as well as to counting the stars" (Barbara Hannah - The Animus, p. 124).

Now, we can equate the Eros principle with the moon, as under its mild light everything dissolves and starts to blend with one another, the lines are blurred, and instead of division, we start seeing how things are related. That's why Eros is more closely related to the mechanism of extroversion, since it seeks to be merged with the objects. With Eros, everything is ambiguous and challenges our perception of good and evil. That's why dealing with the figures from the unconscious is so difficult, as they obey the laws of nature. They're always paradoxical and contact with them can either give or take life.

Eros has a very personal quality and it's about relatedness and reunion. It has an earthy and chthonic quality, it connects us with the five senses and the body, while Logos is more abstract and about the spiritual realm. Logos is about knowledge, while Eros is about relationships. Logos is the principle of will and action, it wants to maintain and conserve things. While Eros is about openness, receptivity, and emptiness. Eros desires and longs, it's dynamic and about movement, and that's why it's also the principle of dissolution and transformation. Logos gives form and shapes the objects, it's the vessel which is filled by Eros. Logos is the demarcation of a river, while Eros is the very flow of water.

6.1 - Animus and Anima

I started by saying that we can't equate the *animus* and Logos with men and Eros and *anima* with women because these are psychological and archetypal principles that transcend gender. These are forces that have been present since the beginning of mankind and their functioning can be found across all cultures in the *syzygies*.

That said, it's important to understand that the unconscious is the receptacle of all human experience, both biological and cultural. During the history of mankind, Logos was projected upon men and Eros upon women. This means that the conscious mind of men is identified with the Logos

and Eros is unconscious, as for women, their conscious mind is identified with the Eros and the Logos is unconscious.

As Barbara Hannah says, “It is just as possible to live one’s life by signposts that exist in relationships as it is to live by the signposts in discriminating knowledge” (Barbara Hannah – *The Animus*, p. 122). Moreover, the nature of the unconscious is to be personified, that's why in the unconscious of men we tend to find the image of a woman that symbolizes the Eros principle, and in the unconscious of women, we tend to find the image of a man that symbolizes the Logos principle.

Why is that? ... Well, that’s a metaphysical question that’s impossible to have a definite answer. There’s an amalgamation of psychological predispositions, biology, and culture. How much each of these components contributed to it is impossible to determine. Perhaps there’s an alternative reality where things are switched, but in ours, that’s how things have been operating.

In theory, it’s possible to have a man with a conscious Eros and a woman with a conscious Logos. Personally, I’ve never seen it. I had the pleasure of working with both homosexual and bisexual men and women, and their *psyches* always revealed the same *psychodynamics* and archetypal images. Again, we’re not discussing gender, so the *anima* can be projected upon men and the *animus* can be projected upon women. In fact, both the *animus* and *anima* are responsible for most of our projections regardless of gender and this happens very frequently.

In my personal experience, sexual preferences don’t change that. However, we always have to see how things are operating on an individual level, that's why this remains an open question and I don’t claim to have the truth, I can only share my studies and experience. Just understand that this isn't about “feeling” in a certain way, we have to follow an empirical approach, as theories mean nothing if not connected to reality.

6.2 - The Persona Compensation

Emma Jung says Carl Jung “Understands these figures to be function complexes behaving in ways compensatory to the outer personality [persona], that is, behaving as if they were inner

personalities and exhibiting the characteristics which are lacking in the outer, and manifest, conscious personality. In a man, these are feminine [eros] characteristics, in a woman, masculine [logos]. Normally both are always present, to a certain degree, but find no place in the person's outwardly directed functioning because they disturb his outer adaptation, his established ideal image of himself" (Emma Jung – The Animus and Anima, p. 3).

It's a good time to remember that the conscious and unconscious have a compensatory and complementary relationship, and the unconscious reacts to the *conscious attitude*. Consequently, the identification with Logos or Eros will generate a counterpart in the unconscious, which we'll find personified, hence the *animus* and *anima*. Emma Jung explains, In her book *Animus and Anima*, that there are three main factors that condition these complexes. First, the experience each person has with representatives of the opposite sex, the collective image women have about men, and the collective image men have about women.

Also, the *parental complexes* play a great role. In men, the *father complex* serves as a basis for the *persona*, and the *mother complex* as a basis for the *anima*. While in women, the *mother complex* serves as a basis for the *persona*, and the *father complex* as a basis for the *animus*. Simply put, the relationship with the parents creates a blueprint about what to expect and how to relate with the opposite sex, and consequently with these inner figures.

Moreover, the *animus* and *anima* act as a compensation for the *persona*, and just as the *persona* is the function of relationship with the external world, the *animus* and *anima* will be the function of relationship with the inner world. Regarding the *persona*, this psychic function always invites us to maintain an image of perfection, to play our social role, and to do exactly what is demanded and expected of us. However, in this process, we tend to lose our sense of individuality and become our titles, our careers, and identify with labels, gender roles, and conventions.

But the more we identify with the *persona*, the less conscious we are about the inner world. This creates a split, and the *animus* and *anima* rebel against us because they contain essential qualities of our personality that aren't being consciously expressed. Of course, the *persona* is not wholly bad, as it allows us to navigate the external world and live in society. The problem starts when you become identified with this mask, as it always leads to a *neurosis* and this artificial

personality is punished by bad moods, *affects*, phobias, obsessive ideas, vices, timidity, and even impotence in the case of men.

Both the *animus* and *anima* are especially poisonous when you seek to hold an ideal of perfection, when you try to have a supreme morality, and when you give in to stereotypes. In that sense, cultural ideals of what a man or woman should be are always detrimental to our psychological development. These inner figures always invite us to discover our individuality and develop our unique way of being that transcends gender stereotypes.

The *animus* and *anima* are the ultimate compensation for our *conscious attitude* as they have all the qualities that can complement our personality and make us whole. However, this process obviously is not easy, as the interaction with these figures always threatens to destroy our *conscious attitude*, as they hold such opposing values. We need to cultivate a strong and flexible ego to hold this paradox so as to produce a new synthesis of our personality and advance in our individuation journey.

In that way, both the *animus* and *anima* become *psychopomps* and act as bridges between personal and impersonal, and between conscious and unconscious. In other words, they stop interfering with our daily lives and relationships and help us reach harmony by bringing to our conscious mind the contents that can complement our personality.

6.3 - The Animus and Anima Function

Lastly, Jung says, “If I were to attempt to put in a nutshell the difference between man and woman in this respect, i.e., what it is that characterizes the animus as opposed to the anima, I could only say this: as the anima produces *moods*, so the animus produces *opinions*; and as the moods of a man issue from a shadowy background, so the opinions of a woman rest on equally unconscious prior assumptions”. (C. G. Jung - V7 – 331).

In a woman, the Logos will have the function of providing true insight, which aids the woman in crafting their particulate worldview instead of operating with prejudices and prior assumptions that tend to destroy their relationships. It gives the woman a connection with the

spiritual realm, inspiration, and drive to go after what she wants. While in the man, the *anima* has mainly the function to give him consciousness of his own emotional life, value system, insight about his relationships, and true purpose in life. Both these figures are also related to creativity and everything that can embellish life and our relationships.

An interesting observation here is that in ancient times the *anima* and *animus* were projected upon the gods and had their place in people's lives. Nowadays, most people don't have a connection with their inner world and cultivate their spirituality, this exacerbates how much the *animus* and *anima* are projected in relationships, and this creates compulsions and toxicity because you expect the other person to give you a sense of purpose, meaning, and spiritual connection. You expect the other person to be a divine entity and when they don't correspond, because no human being can, chaos ensues.

Finally, these inner figures invite us to reconnect with our *souls* and create our unique sense of meaning. Moreover, Jung says that the technical term for the *animus* and *anima* is the *inferior function* but we tend to find them personified, making the *animus* and *anima* the empirical observation of the *inferior function*. That's why it's also important to make a link with typology as the *animus* and *anima* will acquire the opposite qualities of our *main function*. If you're a *thinking type* it will acquire the qualities of *feeling*, and vice versa. If you're an *intuitive type*, it will acquire the qualities of *sensation*, and vice versa. The same thing goes for introversion and extroversion.

7. Animus - The Archetype of Meaning

As Jung says, the conscious mind of a woman has a lunar character, that's why it's a common error to equate the moon with the unconscious, this can only be true for men. In a woman, the qualities of the Sun are unconscious. Moreover, we know that the nature of the unconscious is to be personified, so the masculine image found in their unconscious is denominated *animus*, and it will behave like an autonomous *complex* with its own "personality".

Barbara Hannah explains that the term *animus* "[...] Is the masculine spirit or *unconscious* mind of woman. Emma Jung pointed out recently that one should differentiate very carefully here between the anima and the animus. The anima, as is well known, is Jung's term for the *feminine soul* of man. But it is really a contradiction in terms to speak of the animus as the masculine soul in woman. (This error was made in the early days of Jungian psychology and is still often done today.) In latin the word *animus* means intellect, memory, consciousness, character, and spirit. It is often equated with "mind" and is also used to mean courage, vivacity, bravery, and will. In Jungian psychology it is used primarily to denote the phenomenon of "spirit" in women, and the contrast between the feminine soul (anima) and the masculine spirit (animus) gives us a valuable hint as to the difference between these two figures" (Barbara Hannah - The Animus, p. 2).

In general, a conscious Eros is always more interested in personal relationships and the emotional atmosphere, rather than objective and impersonal facts. Eros gives women immense sensibility which allows them to perceive nuances in relationships that frequently escape men entirely. Naturally, everything that has to do with Logos will remain an unconscious blind spot. In that sense, Jung says the *animus* works mainly as an *opinionating substitute*. Simply put, the *animus* infiltrates a woman's train of thought and falsifies her reality with opinions that tend to be overly critical, harsh, demeaning, and one-sided, and they appear to be the absolute truth and based on objective reality, when they seldom are.

When the *animus* is operating, the woman simply assumes their opinions are right, when in reality, she never consciously thought about it, it's something ready-made. The *animus* works with very impersonal and collective opinions about how people should be and act and how a relationship should work. It's like a rigid formula that if it isn't followed everything is wrong.

Due to this impersonal nature, Emma Jung says that the *animus* is frequently symbolized in myths and dreams as a council of condemnatory judges, and less often as a single tyrannical figure. In that sense, the *animus* voice has mainly two ways of functioning, first it judges and criticizes absolutely everything a woman does, and second, it issues commands and prohibitions.

We can see the *animus* operating with comments like “Every man is like this” or “Every man treats women in such and such way”. Or comments like why they can’t have any female friends because “Every female is judgmental and they’re never truthful”, oh the irony.

The *animus* will also issue rules about how the perfect mother should be, or how a wife should behave. Everything that starts with “should” is usually related to the works of this vitriolic complex. Regarding the inner monologue, there'll be demeaning thoughts about their appearance, their capabilities, and about what they truly want is wrong or unattainable. These impersonal rules and opinions will prevent a woman from connecting with others on an individual level, because if every man or woman is in a determined way, for instance, how will she know them as individuals? Everything will be filtered through these assumptions.

Moreover, Jung says that when the *animus* interferes in a woman’s daily life, it's usually in a place where she hasn’t given the matter her fullest conscious consideration and particularly where she fails in the realm of *feeling*. But the Eros isn’t limited to relationships, so everything that has to do with the body, the five senses, and pleasure will also suffer, as everything will be perceived as sinful or unimportant, generating compulsions and addictions as a compensation.

7.1 - Animus Identification

However, the *animus* also has a paradoxical nature and contains all the qualities that can balance the conscious Eros. The problem is that most women resist the task of developing their spiritual and intellectual capacities, and the psychic energy intended for this purpose falls into the unconscious and gives free rein for a negative *animus*, which can dominate the whole personality.

In that sense, Emma Jung says that when there’s an identification with the *animus*, the woman either didn’t pay attention to her spiritual side or developed it in the wrong way. She points

out that many women over-identify with their masculine side and externally it might seem like a positive *animus*, but unfortunately, this always comes to the detriment of feminine values, and especially their relationships. The results are always a general dissatisfaction with life and depression.

To simplify, the *animus* identification has two main expressions. In the first case, the woman feels victimized, hopeless, and powerless. She believes what she truly wants in life is wrong and unattainable, and chooses to conform to other people's expectations. In the second case, she adopts traditionally masculine traits but expresses them in a very toxic manner. In both cases, their relationships suffer, and there isn't a healthy expression of their femininity. Of course, this is a spectrum and there isn't a recipe about how a man or woman should be, this isn't about conforming to gender stereotypes, as this is an individual pursuit.

However, there's a common misunderstanding that developing the *animus* is about engaging in traditionally masculine things, but it's something much deeper. It's about finding your own sense of meaning and direction in life. It's about crafting your own *cosmovision* and feeling fulfilled. It's about deeply knowing what you want, what's valuable to you, and going after it. It doesn't matter if you want to become an engineer or a dancer, what matters is if that's an authentic expression of your personality.

Nowadays, we see many women trying to get their power back and this is amazing, however, many end up adopting the worst facet of toxic masculinity. They become destructive, not only to themselves but to everyone around them. This isn't developing the *animus*, this is becoming possessed by it, since they're in a blind pursuit for power. Moreover, this *animus* identification generates an inflation, and women put themselves on a high horse dictating how everyone should be and act, they believe they own the truth and they become the tyrants they once despised.

That's why Marie Von Franz says that one way of escaping *animus* possession is by taking a humble attitude and dealing with your own *shadow*. In that sense, the main work is to challenge these thoughts and come up with your own values and beliefs. The relationship with the Eros principle has to be personal and individual, what matters to the woman has to be the most important thing, instead of giving in to collective rules, standards, and assumptions.

7.2 - Animus Integration

At this point, you might be asking yourself, "So how to deal with these intrusive thoughts, opinions, and assumptions?". Well, since the *animus* is a *complex*, Barbara Hannah suggests that women have to personify the *animus*. This is actually a good idea to deal with any *complex*, because when we're able to personify it, we create a separation between us, the conscious Ego, and this part, and this allows us to have a more objective perspective. Fun fact, I recently discovered that Julia Cameron, the author of *The Artist's Way*, calls her inner critic Nigel and this helped her deal with the harsh criticism of her *animus*.

Now, Barbara Hannah says "One of the techniques that Jung recommends for getting acquainted with our animus is to keep a sharp lookout *on our* speech, in particular our thoughts, and to constantly question them as they pass through our minds: "Did I think that?" "Where did that thought come from?" "Who thought that?" [...] if we can force ourselves to practice it and to write down the outcome - for we forget such thoughts almost before we think them - the results can be exceedingly instructive" (Barbara Hannah - *The Animus*, p.17).

Whenever you have an automatic thought, you have to ask yourself who inside you is thinking this and what is the part of yourself having these thoughts. This will help you detach from this automatism as everything that becomes conscious loses its charge. The first part is always to understand the origins of these opinions, for instance, if you have a fixed thought about how women should dress or the kind of work they can do. You can ask yourself where this comes from, a lot of the time you'll discover that this is exactly how your mother or father viewed women, and you just absorbed it and never questioned it.

As we've seen in the last chapter, in women, the *mother complex* serves as a basis for the *persona* and the *father complex* serves as a basis for the *animus*. But often, the negative *animus* of the mother is what shapes the sense of identity of the daughter, so pay special attention to that. A lot of this work will be focused on separating yourself from the parental figures, their values, and beliefs, so as to create your own *cosmovision*.

Obviously, not everything comes from the parents, so you have to question these thoughts and see if you can connect with any experiences you've had since a negative *animus* also promotes

a constant pondering about the past. It highlights all your mistakes and all the things you should've done differently. A bunch of “what ifs”. But you have to realize that this isn't *thinking*, this is simply indulging in fantasies to avoid dealing with reality.

Regarding relationships, the *animus* and *anima* are also a system of expectations about the ideal partner. We'll usually seek someone who can match our fantasies and through this projection, we expect them to fulfill all of our unconscious qualities. In that sense, men usually expect women “to be” their Eros and women expect men “to be” their Logos. But this is much deeper, as there's usually the expectation of the partner giving you meaning and a sense of purpose in life. As you can see, these expectations are childish and often conditioned by the parental complex since few people consciously choose to develop their *animus* and *anima*.

Under this light, we'll project and replicate our toxic inner dynamics on the external, by choosing someone who resembles our negative *animus* or *anima*, and by adopting behaviors that evoke this pattern in our relationships. A common occurrence is to replicate childhood patterns and look for a substitute mother or father which will always create toxic relationships and severe validation seeking dynamics.

That's why one of the best things you can do for your relationships is to deal with your own *animus* or *anima*, because if you resist this task, you'll forever remain childish, and most likely be identified with the *Puer* and *Puella Aeternus*. As Marie Von Franz says, people often stay in toxic relationships to avoid facing that the enemy lives within, since while something is projected it exempts us from the responsibility of dealing with it.

Finally, the gift of the *animus* is to make a woman independent, confident, creative, and uncover her true personality. As the *archetype of meaning*, it's crucial to dedicate time to consciously develop its spiritual function, craft your own perception of life, your sense of identity, and ideas about relationships, since many women feel guilty for wanting to pursue a career and have activities independent from their families and kids.

Moreover, don't forget that the *animus* will acquire the qualities of your *inferior function*, that's why it's so important to understand your typology as this will give you immense insight into

how to integrate it. We can also count on Carl Jung's therapeutic method, dream interpretation, and active imagination technique. Barbara Hannah also highlights how writing is especially important when dealing with the *animus* since the word is the primary vehicle for the Logos. Lastly, reconnecting with your body and having artistic outlets, like music or dancing, can be a great ally to de-potentiate the *animus* and unlock your creativity, since this is the realm of the Eros and there, the *animus* can't touch you.

.

8. Anima - The Archetype of Life

Let's quickly recap that men have the tendency to be consciously identified with Logos and as compensation, this will generate an unconscious Eros. Also, the nature of the unconscious is to be personified, so the image we find in the unconscious of men is denominated *anima*.

Jung says the *anima* is the *archetype of life* that's why the biggest mistake when attempting to understand it is treating it solely as an intellectual concept. In reality, this is simply a term that refers to the emotional life of a man, his relationships, and the authentic expression of his soul. The concept doesn't matter, what's real is his genuine experience with Eros.

That said, since men tend to be consciously identified with Logos, most of them are clueless about their emotional life, and the ones that do have this connection, tend to be possessed by it, rather than having a conscious experience of their feelings. The emotional realm usually threatens men and when they run away from it, the *anima* always has her revenge, mercilessly entangling him in the exact situations he tries to avoid.

We usually see the works of the *anima* whenever there are overreactions, a sense of urgency, and overwhelming emotions. Here is a good place to remember the difference between the *feeling function* and *affects*. The first one is the conscious experience of an emotion and having a clear scale of values, whereas the second is about compulsive emotions and feeling out of control. Consequently, the *anima* isn't about a *feeling* but about moods.

In this light, Jung says "The anima is a factor of the utmost importance in the psychology of a man wherever emotions and affects are at work. She intensifies, exaggerates, falsifies, and mythologizes all emotional relations with his work and with other people of both sexes. The resultant fantasies and entanglements are all her doing. When the anima is strongly constellated, she softens the man's character and makes him touchy, irritable, moody, jealous, vain, and unadjusted. He is then in a state of "discontent" and spreads discontent all around him. Sometimes the man's relationship to the woman who has caught his anima accounts for the existence of this syndrome" (C. G. Jung - V9.1 - §144).

In *Aion*, Jung equates the *anima* with Maya, the goddess of illusion, as she's constantly interjecting in a man's interpretation of reality. Moreover, Maya's intentions of enveloping, embracing, and devouring unmistakably point to the *mother complex*. In a man, the father complex serves as a basis for the persona while the mother complex as a basis for the *anima*. Consequently, the relationship with the mother (or lack of) has a great impact on the *anima*, as well as how the father deals with the feminine.

In that sense, when a man is caught in his mother complex, there's a tendency to live regressively, always looking back and wanting to remain a child. He resists carving his own path and becomes indecisive, insecure, and weak. He attempts to escape and live his own life only to find himself giving up and coming back the next moment.

The effects of the devouring mother make a man averse to touch reality, he lives in a fantastical world where he expects everything to be given to him without any effort. This also conditions his expectations about women, as he seeks a magical being that will provide him with a sense of eternal childhood, and will take care of him like a dedicated mother. He expects his partner to allow him to remain childish and not place any demands that he become a grown man. Of course, I'm talking about the *Puer Aeternus*, popularly known as the man-child.

However, as the *archetype of life*, the *anima* is what presents a man with his call to adventure, challenges him to find what's truly valuable, and demands that he take a stance in life. That's why the *anima* is also associated with flings of courage and bravery, to follow and defend the values of the soul. But if a man resists this task the *anima* will entangle him into the exact situations he tries to avoid. This confrontation happens especially with women because when you don't follow your authentic path and create your unique sense of meaning, this expectation will be projected upon them.

In other words, women become the whole life of a man who narcissistically expects them to fulfill his every need. This violates the masculine spirit and makes men weak and codependent since they live to win their approval and validation. In that sense, the *anima* demands that you get your hands dirty and have the audacity to carve your own path, as she only reveals herself to those who prove to be worthy. When you rise up to this challenge and follow your *pistis*, the *anima* becomes

your most faithful helper, she unravels her secrets, gives you reassurance, and gifts you with meaning and aliveness.

8.1 - Anima Integration

When a man accepts the challenge of integrating the *anima*, Emma Jung explains that "It is not a question of either surrendering his masculinity completely to the service of the Lady Anima or losing her entirely, but only of granting a certain space to the feminine, which is also a part of his being. This he does by recognizing and realizing the eros, the principle of relationship, which means that he not only becomes aware of his feeling, but also makes use of it, because to create, and especially to preserve, a relationship, a value judgment (which is what feeling is) cannot be dispensed with. A man by nature tends to relate to objects, to his work, or to some other field of interest; but what matters to a woman is the personal relation, and this is true also of the anima. Her tendency is to entangle a man in such relationships, but she can also serve him well in giving them shape — that is, she can do so after the feminine element has been incorporated into consciousness. As long as this element works autonomously, it disturbs relations or makes them impossible" (Emma Jung - The Animus and Anima, p. 77).

Most men mistakenly assume that if they give voice to their feminine side they'll become emasculated but it's the other way around. When there isn't a conscious dedication to integrating the *anima*, it functions like an autonomous complex making him touchy, jealous, overly-sentimental, and even causing impotence. There needs to be a balance between Eros and Logos because if a man doesn't cultivate a sense of direction, drive, discipline, and decisiveness, he'll be a mere puppet in the hands of the Lady Anima. Eros has to be incorporated into the masculine spirit, which Jung summarizes as knowing what you want and going after it. When men have a conscious experience of the *anima* they know what's truly valuable to them, they know what's meaningful, and they are resolute.

Now, the *anima* functions as a compensation for the persona, that's why one of the biggest challenges to its integration is a strong persona identification, which is usually tinged by toxic masculinity. Moreover, this identification makes men devalue feminine qualities and they become vain, shallow, and only live for the appearances, and this gives free rein to a negative *anima*.

He'll seek superficial relationships and usually for the stereotypical trophy wife, which is the perfect match for an *animus* possessed woman who's identified with her body and is only interested in having power and status through her relationships. Moreover, sex and emotional connection are usually dissociated from one another, that's why the main reason men get addicted to sex is because it gives them validation which substitutes intimacy and the connection with their own souls.

That's why it's of the utmost importance that men seek to consciously develop their *anima* and cultivate receptivity to the Eros principle. Since it obeys the laws of nature, we can't apprehend it intellectually, we must live and embody it, for Eros is the realm of arts, romance, beauty, music, poetry, and authentic connections.

The *anima* demands a genuine expression of the soul, that's why overly focusing on aesthetics annihilates its creative force, and the only way the *anima* encounters an outlet is through anxiety, depression, and all forms of addiction. Practically speaking, when dealing with the *inferior function*, it's important to cultivate a sacred space for it in your life free from judgments and expectations.

Here I can give you a personal example, whenever I'm composing music I have to accommodate these two sides, one is the creative trying to be expressed and the other is trying to order and give it form. When I'm too focused on aesthetics I get lost in trying to find the perfect chord, the right sequence, and I wonder how people are going to judge my lyrics. This crushes creativity as the *anima* isn't interested in perfection or how useful it can be, the *anima* wants you to shape the truth of your soul.

This requires diligence as laziness or timidity won't be tolerated. Many men are absorbed by their work and intellectual pursuits and all their free time is spent watching TV or doom scrolling. After all, men are always tired and they just want to relax. I can relate to that but the problem is that this is used to avoid understanding their feelings and attending to their creative potential.

To make things worse, they project this duty on their partners expecting them to be the perfect mother and housewives without them lifting a finger. Then, they wonder why their relationships aren't fulfilling and their wife isn't in the mood to have sex. This relationship pattern

doesn't allow women to develop their *animus* either, which is the perfect formula for toxic relationships.

As a man, you have to be present for your family, lead your relationship, and take the responsibility to develop your emotional capacity. When the *anima* is constellated there's always a sense of urgency and it wants everything NOW. That's why it's important to cultivate the ability to analyze your moods and separate them from objective situations. In contrast, with passive men, the *anima* might be trying to compensate for this lack of action. Instead of being trapped by paralysis by analysis, this impulse is demanding that you make a decision. The more you make your own values conscious, the less you'll feel this overwhelming pull.

Finally, the *anima* gives a man the courage to follow his own heart and overcome any obstacle. It gifts him with the creative treasures of the collective unconscious and inspiration to accomplish meaningful work. Eros gives men the possibility of creating true friendships and romantic relationships that transcend the physical.

9 - The Art of Dream Interpretation

Now that we've covered the foundations of Jungian Psychology, we're ready to further our exploration with Carl Jung's dream interpretation method. Here's where everything comes to life, shall we begin with a quote from Marie Von Franz: "The dream one gets at night is always like a letter from the same inner center, from the Self. Every dream is that, and the writer of the letter is always the same: the Self, the one thing, the *quid*" (Marie Von Franz - Alchemical Active Imagination, p. 67).

Learning how to trust and follow these authentic letters had a tremendous impact on my psychological development. Whenever I'm analyzing my dreams I feel like I'm tapping into this eternal source of knowledge that springs directly from the the *Self*. We must approach it with reverence and learn its symbolic language to establish a dialogue with the depths of our being. This profound experience has brought me an immense degree of confidence that I'm on the right path and is constantly teaching me how to solve my own problems. Sometimes I get kicked in the face, while in other instances I'm reminded of my true capabilities.

9.1 - The Prospective Nature of the Psyche

Learning to interpret dreams is like learning a new idiom, in this case, the metaphorical language of the unconscious. Jung says "[...] One of the basic principles of analytical psychology is that dream-images are to be understood symbolically; that is to say, one must not take them literally, but must surmise a hidden meaning in them" (C. G. Jung - V5 – §4). That said, differently from the conscious mind, the unconscious isn't bound to moral standards and the laws of time and continuity, it obeys the laws of nature.

As we've previously discussed, Jung incorporated both the Freudian and Adlerian perspectives into his psychology. Consequently, when analyzing dreams or any psychological phenomena, we must hold opposing perspectives, namely that of *causality* and *finality*. In Jung's words, "In psychological matters, the question "Why does it happen?" is not necessarily more productive of results than the other question "To what purpose does it happen?" (C. G. Jung - V8 – §530).

This means we can't interpret unconscious images solely based on causality, that is, seeking to understand the origins or story behind it. This is only half of the equation and promotes a regressive attitude. These symbols also have a purpose and goal, which reveals the prospective and creative nature of the *psyche*. "The causal standpoint merely inquires how this psyche has become what it is, as we see it today. The constructive standpoint asks how, out of this present psyche, a bridge can be built into its own future" (C. G. Jung - V3 – §399). Working with the paradox of *why and what for?* is one of the things that make Jungian Psychology so unique since we understand that in the unconscious lies the embryonic seeds of everything we're yet to become, and the *psyche* is constantly creating its own future.

This may sound complex but applying it can be quite simple so let's explore an example. I had a patient who had frequent dreams revolving around the military and every time he had a visceral reaction of disgust. This is not a surprise since his father was emotionally absent and worked for the police force. Simply put, they didn't get along well and he was carrying many wounds from this relationship. Now, interpreting the military symbol through the reductive perspective invariably takes us to his *father complex*, to his past all the stories and memories associated with it. This is an important step to understand how our internal dynamics were formed and how they're operating, but it's often a dead end.

At that moment, he was still living with his mother and was struggling to build discipline, and truly commit to finding his own path in life. He was hesitating to become an adult and the qualities that would help him move further were all present in the military symbol. There's an interesting thing that happens, when we can only appreciate something negatively we also can't incorporate the positive traits of it. The military can be seen as hostile, violent, and tyrannical. However, in his case, it was compensating for his lack of attitude, discipline, and seeking to become independent.

As the months passed, his perspective about the military symbol started to shift and with it, he also experienced changes in the real world. The prospective portion of the military symbol was propelling him to grow and overcome his *father complex*, as it anticipated a development of his personality. After two years of working together, he had become independent, disciplined, and committed to his craft.

Before, he could only appreciate authority negatively and this also prevented him from occupying any leadership position. Once he integrated this military symbol by transforming his *conscious attitude* and making practical changes, he was able to conquer authority over his own life and became a leader in his field. At last, he overcame his *father complex* and became truly independent.

9.2 - The Mechanics of Dream Interpretation

Now let's move to the mechanics of dream interpretation. One thing that we must always have in mind is that the relationship between conscious and unconscious is compensatory and complementary. Also, the *conscious attitude* acts by *selecting – directing – excluding*, and everything that is incompatible with conscious values will either be repressed or simply remain unconscious.

These incompatible contents will form our *shadow* and are the main material for our dreams, as everything that was forsaken has the purpose of balancing our *conscious attitude*. If this process isn't clear to you, I strongly recommend that you reread the second chapter on *psychodynamics*.

Jung says, “[...] The dream is a spontaneous self-portrayal, in symbolic form, of the actual situation in the unconscious” (C. G. Jung - V8 – §505). In other words, a dream is a sneak peek into the unconscious. It helps to envision them as if we were watching a play unfolding in our minds. In this light, I brought a simple dream analysis structure Jung proposes in *Structure and Dynamics of The Psyche*:

- **Dream phases:** Introduction (exposition) – *Peripetia* (story development) – *Lysis* (culmination or ending).
- **Important elements:** Local (environment and context) and *Dramatis Personae* (characters).

Jung says the first step to analyzing a dream is to establish its context with minute care and to do so, we must stick as close as possible to dream images. He explains that free association can help us uncover our complexes but rarely the true meaning of a dream, that's why we must follow a

circumambulatory process. That is, staying with the symbols and allowing the dream itself to reveal its meaning. That said, when interpreting dreams, we have to pay close attention to the story that's being told. It's crucial to dissect the narrative and have clarity on the sequence of events. It's interesting to analyze dreams as if they were separated by different acts and be as thorough as we can with our descriptions, as it helps with turning unconscious contents more vivid.

The first act is the introduction and we can pair it with describing the local and context everything takes place. What is the first thing you remember? How's the environment? And how's the general emotional atmosphere of this dream? The second act is the *peripetia*, in other words, what actually happens in the dream. What adventures or misadventures you're engaged in? What are the conflicts meant to be solved? The third and final act is the *lysis*. This is the most important one, as it will reveal what the dream is compensating for. In other words, in which direction the *Self* is trying to take us in order to establish the right balance again.

Once we have the basic structure of a dream, it's time to gather our *personal amplifications* also known as associations, also sticking to the *circumambulatory process*. Here, it's important to remember that our *psyche* is structured around four different functions, consequently, *psychic images* have four layers: *thinking*, *feeling*, *sensation*, and *intuition*. In this light, Marie Von Franz says "Making associations around a theme means plunging it back into the unconscious for a brief moment [...] The main point is to focus especially on emotional qualities and sensitivity, not definitions [...] You need to really try to rescue the original richness of what that image conveys. That's why we amplify, and that's the right way to go. Amplifying means going back as far below the threshold as possible, and reliving those pervasive emotional ideas, sensations, and reactions we have about something".

For instance, let's say there's an important sword in the dream. What do you think about this sword? What emotions or personal stories are associated with it? What is the material and the design? How's this sword used? What is the particular meaning this sword has to you? We have to follow this process with every single image and character in the dream. That's why seeking recipes on Google or AI is nonsense. The true meaning always lies within and is unraveled by allowing the symbols to affect us. It's only when we're out of *personal amplifications* that we can look for more collective understandings, such as mythological and archetypal motifs, to enrich our analysis.

Jung also explores the notion of *relatively fixed symbols*. This means that certain images are closely related to a particular interpretation. For instance, the child tends to symbolize renewal, potential, possibilities, and rebirth. However, this is rather vague, even though this symbol might bear this meaning, what's important is to understand how this is operating in the individual *psyche*.

The Subjective x Objective Level

The next important step is to understand if these images should be interpreted on the *subjective level* or the *objective level*. In other words, when we're supposed to interpret the symbols as a subjective part of ourselves or a concrete relationship with the outer world. For instance, when we see our best friend in the dream, do I interpret it as a part of my personality? Or as my actual friend in real life?

Well, Jung says that in about 90% of cases, dreams should be interpreted on the *subjective level*, and that objective interpretations only become more frequent when someone is advanced in their *individuation process*. However, I find that we often have a *mixed interpretation* and this tends to happen when the character in question is close to the dreamer. In this situation, it's important to uncover the projections, and at the same time, find guidance on how to deal with said person. Archetypal dreams, or *big dreams*, are also rarer. When we're confronted with images from the collective unconscious, we'll frequently need knowledge of mythological motifs. But even though we're dealing with primordial images, it's imperative to understand what role they're playing for a particular person. In a sense, the interpretation will also be individual.

That said, for the majority of dreams, we should follow this: "The whole dream-work is essentially subjective, and a dream is a theatre in which the dreamer is himself the scene, the player, the prompter, the producer, the author, the public, and the critic. This simple truth forms the basis for a conception of the dream's meaning which I have called *interpretation on the subjective level*. Such an interpretation, as the term implies, conceives all the figures in the dream as personified features of the dreamer's own personality" (C. G. Jung - V8 – §509).

Continuing the "play" metaphor, to properly interpret a dream, we have to first understand its story. Right after, we have to gather our *personal amplifications* of every image and character in

the dream, which are personified *complexes* and *archetypes*. In that sense, the way we act and the choices we make reveal our deepest psychological tendencies and give us insight into how to resolve our conflicts. Lastly, after we've gathered all this information, it's time to understand what is the dream compensating.

9.3 - The Psychodynamics of Dream Compensation

Jung says, "From all this it should now be clear why I make it a heuristic rule, in interpreting a dream, to ask myself: What conscious attitude does it compensate? By so doing, I relate the dream as closely as possible to the conscious situation; indeed, I would even assert that without knowledge of the conscious situation, the dream can never be interpreted with any degree of certainty. Only in the light of this knowledge is it possible to make out whether the unconscious content carries a plus or a minus sign" (C. G. Jung - V16.2 – §334).

Moreover, it's only possible to interpret a dream by knowing the individual context as well as the *personal amplifications*. Also, Jung establishes that we must work with the premise that we do have an *optimum vital point*. Which occurs when consciousness is at a perfect balance between the demands of the outer world (*persona*) and the demands of the inner world (individuation). In that sense, compensation means equilibrating or substituting the *conscious attitude*, by comparing different data or points of view, so as to produce an adjustment or a rectification.

In this light, in *Structures and Dynamics of The Psyche*, Jung explores three possibilities:

- If the conscious attitude to the life situation is in large degree one-sided, then the dream takes the opposite side.
- If the conscious has a position fairly near the "middle," the dream is satisfied with variations.
- If the conscious attitude is "correct" (adequate), then the dream coincides with and emphasizes this tendency, though without forfeiting its peculiar autonomy.

To illustrate this, Jung gives us an interesting example in *Practice of Psychotherapy*, pay close attention to how the interpretation changes depending on the *conscious attitude*. First, a young man dreams of a horse jumping over a ravine. His *conscious attitude* is always hesitant and he's scared to pursue his own path in life. Consequently, the dream is telling him to be bold and take risks, after all, the first half of life is meant to seek expansion and strengthen the ego complex.

In contrast, a man in his mid-50s has the exact same dream, but he was always courageous and able to conquer his life. In that sense, the dream reveals the origins of his neurosis and highlights that it's time to leave this youthful attitude behind since in the second half of life, energy must be directed to enrich his inner life.

Now, "For dream-contents to be assimilated, it is of overriding importance that no real values of the conscious personality should be damaged, much less destroyed, otherwise, there is no one left to do the assimilating [...] We must see to it that the values of the conscious personality remain intact, for unconscious compensation is only effective when it co-operates with an integral consciousness. Assimilation is never a question of "this *or* that," but always of "this *and* that" (C. G. Jung - V16.2 – §338).

Interpreting dreams is always a challenge to our *conscious attitude*, and maintaining our ground can be difficult at times. But we have to understand that it's a dialectical procedure between our conscious values and the perspective of the unconscious since integrating dream messages requires a *moral confrontation* and making practical changes. Moreover, dreams often exacerbate their contents "to make a point", that's why we can't blindly follow them. We must find a middle ground and understand what's being demanded of us.

Here's an interesting example, individuals who tend to avoid conflict and engage in people-pleasing frequently have dreams in which they're screaming at the top of their lungs at the people who cross their boundaries. If you take the dream literally, you wouldn't take any responsibility, believe other people are always the problem and start yelling at everyone the next day. Now, if we follow Jung's method you'd see these characters as a representation of your own complexes that make you engage with the external world as a people-pleaser.

Moreover, you'd apply the questions *why and what for?* And everything we already learned about how to deal with complexes. But to keep things simple, in this context, the dream is compensating for a lack of boundaries and assertiveness, in that sense, it'd be important to understand the exact areas and relationships that require open communication, placing healthy boundaries, and committing to learning to better express yourself

9.4 - General Guidelines

Dream interpretation is an art and only practice can make you good at it. The way I learned to interpret dreams was by first working with an analyst myself, devouring Jung's *collected works*, and then interpreting countless dreams of my patients. Nowadays, I'm confident interpreting most of my dreams and they have become a valuable compass on my journey. But every now and then, I still have dreams that get me absolutely puzzled for days and I have to seek help.

In these moments, I always remember Von Frans used to say that trying to interpret our own dreams is like trying to see our own backs, as dreams come from our blind spots and reveal what we don't know. That said, rushing with interpretations is often a sign that we interpreted them through the lenses of our *neurosis*. That's why a thorough understanding of our *conscious attitude* and psychological tendencies is imperative, otherwise, you'll remain with one-sided interpretations.

That said, I'll leave a few extra tips for interpreting dreams:

- Always interpret the characters subjectively first, as there's a great chance you're watching your own *complexes*.
- Always interpret dreams in a positive and a negative light, be careful if you're enamored with one perspective.
- Always interpret dreams through a reductive and prospective perspective – *Why and what for?*.
- In the beginning, don't make any major decisions, rushing can be a sign of a neurotic interpretation.

- Always remember that dreams come from the *inferior function* and analyzing it only from the perspective of the *main function* will result in a neurotic interpretation.

Lastly, Jung used to say that the only criteria for a dream being successfully interpreted was if it helped the patient move forward. In other words, if the interpretation unlocks new perspectives and a new attitude that can solve conflicts, then it's a good enough interpretation. Plus, a degree of certainty only comes after analyzing a series of dreams and getting acquainted with frequent symbols and motifs.

10 - Active Imagination Deciphered

Active Imagination is the most disruptive endeavor Carl Jung partook in. As he states, he didn't invent it, he simply rediscovered it. However, he took this practice to new heights and gave us a map and a terminology capable of capturing and translating the dynamism of the *psyche* into words, thus giving more people the gift of experimenting for themselves. Active Imagination gives us the key to developing a symbolic attitude and apprehending the mystery of the *Self*.

10.1 - The Mirrored World

Before we explore this technique, it's important to remember the notion of *psychic reality* and Carl Jung's attitude toward metaphysics: "[...] It is really my purpose to push aside, without mercy, the metaphysical claims of all esoteric teaching" [...] To understand metaphysically is impossible; it can only be done psychologically I therefore strip things of their metaphysical wrappings in order to make them objects of psychology (C. G. Jung - The Secret of The Golden Flower – p. 129).

By adopting the notion of a *psychic reality*, the Active Imagination realm works like a mirrored world and unravels a symbolic representation of what we're currently experiencing as it uncovers the archetypal narratives we're living. Adopting this perspective is crucial because during this process we'll be dealing with *psychic images* directly and this notion allows us to maintain an objective perspective, as we'll be uncovering the deep psychological factors that drive our *psyche*, namely *complexes* and *archetypes*.

The main purpose of Active Imagination is to deal with these psychological factors in a personified form as every aspect of the *shadow*, the psychological functions, and the *animus* and *anima* are all perceived as *complexes* by the conscious mind. They frequently appear as the characters in our dreams and by engaging with them, we can uncover our deepest psychological tendencies.

Moreover, Jung explains that "[...] Whoever has understood the thing meant by psychic reality need not fear falling back into primitive demonology because that reality is admitted. If the unconscious figures are not accorded the dignity of spontaneously effective factors, one becomes

the victim of a one-sided belief in the conscious, which finally leads to a state of mental tension. Catastrophes are then bound to occur, because, despite all one's consciousness, the dark psychic powers have been overlooked. It is not we who personify them; they have a personal nature from the very beginning" (C. G. Jung - The Secret Of The Golden Flower p. 119).

Now, it's important to realize that imagery is just one means of expressing the unconscious as the *psyche* is structured around the four functions, namely *thinking*, *feeling*, *sensation*, and *intuition*. In other words, a *psychic image* has four layers. This means the symbolic language of the unconscious can be manifested through various forms, such as inner dialogue and speech, creative endeavors such as painting or playing music, emotions and bodily sensations, and even dancing.

Furthermore, when immersed in Active Imagination, our whole body must be engaged regardless of the tool we're using. I often experience my whole body shaking, tensing, and relaxing when I'm writing or playing music because I allow myself to be fully taken by my emotions and *affects*. That said, perhaps you're wondering how this technique is different from traditional methods, and simply put, the difference is in the "active" part. While traditional meditation focuses on detaching from our thoughts and bodily sensations, Active Imagination has the goal of focusing on the unconscious images and dialogue with them.

It's a dialectical procedure between the conscious ego and the unconscious perspective in which we strive to reach an agreement and find new solutions for our conflicts. The simplest way to understand this is as if you're engaging in a therapy session with yourself. In this light, following guided meditations or hypnotherapy isn't Active Imagination either. First, because they work through suggestion and not with spontaneous fantasies arising from the individual. Second, because you're passively being guided during the whole process and aren't confronting the unconscious material.

To perform Active Imagination, we need our ego-complex intact as we'll be the ones directing the process. During the procedure, we have to make decisions, argue, ask questions, and sometimes even challenge these inner figures. We need an ego complex that's strong enough to contain the unconscious, i.e., capable of holding opposing and complementary truths at the same time. Not only that but an ego complex capable of maintaining an objective perspective and not being identified with these figures.

Because if you identify yourself with an *archetype*, you'll experience psychic inflation. That's when things can go badly, and we see megalomaniac people thinking they are the next incarnation of Jesus, for instance. That's why Active Imagination has to be done with caution and has its dangers, the most poignant one is *psychosis*. That said, if you're just curious and want to experiment with something different, don't do it. If you're not established in real life yet and have no tangible responsibilities don't do it either, as you need solid roots in reality.

Every time you hesitate in life and indulge in fantasies, you're bound to face the dark and devouring facet of the unconscious. This is often the case with the *Puer* and *Puella Aeternus*. Active imagination is meant to be a tool to better live your life, not a magical place you can escape to. During his confrontation with the unconscious, Carl Jung was raising a family, seeing several patients a day, and working for the Swiss army. He never neglected his commitments to real life and that's a major part of constituting a strong ego-complex.

Lastly, If you're using any kind of drugs, yes, even weed, don't do it. In this case, your ego-complex isn't engaged in the process. You can read more about that in the book *Psychotherapy* by Marie Von Franz. Finally, always remember that the unconscious reacts to our *conscious attitude*. As Jung writes in *Psychology and Alchemy*: "We know that the mask of the unconscious is not rigid—it reflects the face we turn towards it. Hostility lends it a threatening aspect, friendliness softens its features" (C. G. Jung - V12 – §29).

10.2 - When is Active Imagination advised?

Carl Jung never left a clear set of instructions to perform Active Imagination except for a few precious insights scattered through his collected works. However, he entrusted Marie Von Franz and mostly Barbara Hannah to teach this technique. In *Inner Journey*, Hannah shares when is Active Imagination is generally advised. Jung personally attended this seminar and answered questions in the end.

Here are the main situations:

1. "When the unconscious is obviously overflowing with fantasies, which is particularly often the case with people who are very rational or intellectual".

2. “To reduce the number of dreams when there are too many”.
3. “A third reason for doing active imagination is when there are too few dreams”.
4. ”If someone feels, or seems to be, under indefinable influences, under a sort of spell, or feels or seems to be behind a sort of glass screen”.
5. “When the adaptation to life has been injured“.
6. “When someone falls into the same hole again and again”.

10.3 - The Procedure – A step-by-step approach

Now, in *Psychotherapy*, Marie Von Franz shares a simple step-by-step to perform Active Imagination:

1. As we know, first one must empty one’s own ego consciousness, free oneself from the thought flow of the ego.

The first skill we have to develop to enter the Active Imagination space is being able to fully focus. The state we’re aiming to reach is a combination of being relaxed but alert. This is where traditional meditation techniques can be helpful but the best tool I ever found is Yoga Nidra, since instead of seeking to detach from your thoughts and sensations, this technique teaches you to be in your body and trains your focus extensively.

Marie Von Franz also states the unconscious responds well to rituals, both for starting and finishing, as it invites the participation of inorganic matter. That said, every Active Imagination session starts with focusing on the *psychic images* and to me, having *sensation* as an *inferior function*, the secret to opening the unconscious doors lies in fully being with the emotional charge and bodily sensations.

I find it especially useful to utilize departure points, such as:

- *Affects*.
- Dream fragments.
- A genuine question.
- Spontaneous fantasies.
- A narrative or repeating pattern.

You simply pick one of them and try your best to match the psychological state of when you're experiencing it and allow things to unfold in your mind.

2. At this point one must let a fantasy image arising from the unconscious flow into the field of inner perception.

Remember that *psychic images* have four layers. Maybe you won't see anything, but you'll hear a word and even have physical sensations. The most important thing is to allow yourself to sink into the *affects* provided by these images deeper and deeper. In that sense, a great obstacle to starting is fear of the unknown and being unable "to return". The way I found to overcome this is by creating a safety net for myself.

You need to develop grounding practices, learn to emotionally regulate, and build healthy habits like going to the gym and having proper nutrition before attempting Active Imagination. When you feel safe and know you can easily "come back to earth", it's easier to allow yourself to be fully taken by the *affects*. But especially in the beginning, please don't underestimate how powerful the unconscious can be, as one of the dangers is psychosis.

3. Now comes the third phase. It consists of giving the innerly perceived fantasy image a form by writing it down, painting it, sculpting it, writing it as music, or dancing it (in which case the movements of the dance must be noted down).

It's imperative to take the unconscious as a reality and refrain from altering your experiences. Try to be as faithful as possible as "The unconscious contents want first of all to be seen clearly, which can only be done by giving them shape, and to be judged only when everything they have to say is tangibly present" (C. G. Jung - V8 – §179). In this first moment, the goal is to allow the unconscious to speak it's only later that we'll criticize it with our conscious judgments.

4. The fourth phase is the key one, the one that is missing in most imagination techniques—moral confrontation with the material one has already produced. At this point Jung warns us of a mistake that is frequently made that jeopardizes the whole process. This is the mistake of entering into the inner events with a fictive ego rather than one's real ego.

Many people enter the Active Imagination realm as a form of escape from the conflicts of their daily lives. As a result, they try to be something that they are not and act in ways completely different from their real personalities. Of course, this jeopardizes the whole process, as you must respond to the inner events and figures as if they were happening in real waking life. Your real personality must be brought in.

5. Finally there is still the concluding phase—applying in daily life what one has learned in active imagination.

Again, most people have a childish attitude toward the unconscious and never turn their insights into actual experience. This is the same as going to therapy every week and just because you're talking about your conflicts, you pretend they're resolved instead of making practical changes. In reality, this is just a maneuver to escape from your own soul.

Once more, Active Imagination is meant to be a support to life. If you're detaching from reality and feeling isolated, there's something wrong. Either you've been neglecting your

commitments to real life or you're not taking the reality of the soul seriously. But without moral confrontation and concrete action, everything is useless and at best a mere intellectual exercise.

Barbara Hannah says "It took Jung many years, for he was not satisfied with learning to see the images of the unconscious, or even with dealing with them actively in his fantasies. He did not feel at ease until he took "the most important step of all": finding their place and purpose" in his own actual outer life. This, he says, the most important step in active imagination, is "what we usually neglect to do. **Insight into the myth of our unconscious, must be converted into ethical obligation**" (Barbara Hannah - Encounters With The Soul - p. 25).

The truth is that every time you seek knowledge from the unconscious, your responsibility increases. The individuation journey is a balance between the demands of the inner and outer world. However, it's in the external world that we must apply our insights and take decisive action, as our life is the canvas to concretize our *personal myths*.

As you can see, understanding the Active Imagination procedure is quite simple. First, we have to allow the unconscious to speak and give it shape. Then analyze the fantasies and understand how they fit into our lives. What's complex is that to do it properly, we need knowledge of Carl Jung's whole theory, starting with deeply knowing our *conscious attitude* to understand how the unconscious is compensating or complementing it.

Moreover, the unconscious isn't made of only repressed aspects, due to its prospective nature, it's also the creative matrix of everything we are yet to become. In that sense, the unconscious also reveals creative and embryonic aspects of our personality and once we tap into it, it becomes our duty to develop it.

That said, I think the best way to learn how to interpret the symbolic language of the unconscious and deal with *complexes* and *archetypes* is to begin with dream analysis. My general recommendation is to start following your dreams and making practical changes accordingly, once this becomes natural, and you're attending to all of your responsibilities, you should be ready to attempt Active Imagination.

11 - The Individuation Journey

Recently, I got married and my wife and I had the amazing opportunity to visit Mendoza, Argentina. This region is famous for producing a few of the best wines in the world, currently, three vineyards are ranked in the top 10 (2024). Naturally, we had to visit them. During these tours, it's common to learn about the story of the family and how everything came to be, as well as their process of making wine. One story stood out, the tale of Alejandro Vigil and the creation of his bodega *El Enemigo*, which translates as "The Enemy".

When Alejandro was entertaining the idea of creating his own bodega, he was already a renowned winemaker. He was and still is the main consultant of the bodega *Catena Zapata*, currently number one in the world. However, despite his undeniable talent, he was unsure if he could create a successful brand and many doubts flooded his mind. One part of him wanted to dare and produce a new unique kind of wine, while the other was afraid of failure and committed to remaining small.

One of Alejandro's best friends witnessed him struggle and told him: "You should name your new bodega *El Enemigo*", because what you're afraid of lives within and you must overcome this inner struggle". At that moment, Alejandro understood that he was the one standing in his own way and dared to take the first step. He confronted his own *shadow* and today, *El Enemigo* occupies the 9th position in the world.

This is a great story to illustrate the *individuation process* and the confrontation with the *shadow* because one thing that few people realize is that it must take place in the real world. When people embark on the self-knowledge journey, there's an initial tendency to withdraw from the external world and spend a lot of time alone reflecting and analyzing their choices and decisions. In fact, many people completely isolate themselves. Although this is only natural in the beginning, this conceals a deep resistance to fully engaging with life and having real experiences.

In that sense, self-knowledge becomes just another coping mechanism. While we're learning about our traumas and theorizing about why we are the way we are, or why our parents did such and such things, we have an illusory sense of accomplishment and control. We feel like we're the next Freud or Jung about to revolutionize the psychology field, but there's a problem, it's just a theory.

It's just another rationalization disconnected from reality and another way to avoid facing our darkest parts, making tough decisions, and taking a stance in life.

Carl Jung gives an amazing example in the *collected works* about a highly intelligent guy who wanted to be analyzed by him. He claimed to have read all of his books and produced an essay about his *neurosis*. Well, Jung was intrigued and accepted to see him and even told the guy that his paper was so good that he could publish it, however, he wanted to know more about his personal life. Obviously, this stroked his ego and he went on talking about his life, apparently, he traveled a lot and lived a luxurious life despite not making a lot of money. Jung continued to ask questions and found out that this guy was manipulating a poor woman who worked as a teacher to pay for his expenses. He confessed that she believed they would be together eventually, but he was just leading her on with his lies.

Legend says Jung was pissed off and told him that producing a thesis on his *neurosis* is useless if you don't have a real *moral confrontation*. The guy refused to see that he was taking advantage of this woman and said Jung knew nothing about psychology. I know this is laughable but it happens all of the time. People do everything they can to avoid dealing with the real problem and making an actual change. Von Franz frequently says people get enamored with their *neurosis* and even learn all the right psychological terms to justify their lack of action. But you must hammer this in your head, you're not going to solve anything intellectually, theories are just meant to bring clarity, as change only happens with actions in the real world.

As Jung states in *Psychology and Alchemy*, "People will do anything, no matter how absurd, in order to avoid facing their own souls. They will practice Indian yoga and all its exercises, observe a strict regimen of diet, learn theosophy by heart, or mechanically repeat mystic texts from the literature of the whole world— all because they cannot get on with themselves and have not the slightest faith that anything useful could ever come out of their own souls. Thus the soul has gradually been turned into a Nazareth from which nothing good can come. Therefore let us fetch it from the four corners of the earth—the more farfetched and bizarre it is the better! I have no wish to disturb such people at their pet pursuits, but when anybody who expects to be taken seriously is deluded enough to think that I use yoga methods and yoga doctrines or that I get my patients, whenever possible, to draw mandalas for the purpose of bringing them to the “right point”—then I

really must protest and tax these people with having read my writings with the most horrible inattention” (C.G. Jung - V12 - §126).

11.1 - The Symbol Formation Process

Now, Carl Jung explains that individuation takes place in holding a paradox between the demands of the external world, the *persona*, and the demands of the inner world, the *soul*. This means that we must find a balance between cultivating our individuality while making concessions in our relationships and contributing to society since our self-knowledge pursuits are meaningless when they're not brought to the concrete world. Just like the story of Alejandro Vigil, his confrontation with the *shadow* demanded that he dared to create something new, and not only entertain an imaginary vineyard in his mind.

The *individuation process* is about getting our hands dirty and paying the price to become who we truly are, it isn't static and it doesn't have a fixed and final goal, as individuation is an ongoing process and an ideal to be pursued. Here, I believe it's important to demystify the "myth of being cured" because many people sell this idea that we should be above any suffering and someone who overcame their traumas will live in "eternal bliss". What a bunch of crap! This conceals a childish attitude seeking to be above the human experience and to be shielded from reality. It's just another cop-out, as the individuation journey demands that we let go of these fantasies of being a special snowflake and become more human. It's about achieving completeness rather than illusory perfection.

Sure, by dealing with our *shadow* we will become more conscious and less reactive, and many things that used to produce suffering will dissipate. We can uncover true self-confidence, autonomy, and authenticity, and all of that translates into simply being happier, accomplishing meaningful work, and having better and healthier relationships. However, we're still human and suffering is part of life and often an important teacher. Every time we deny important elements of our personality and the human experience, we're fragmented. Interestingly, the exact aspects we judge as bad or inferior are the ones that can redeem our souls. Jung calls this process of "becoming complete", the *symbol formation process*: "The saving factor is the symbol, which embraces both conscious and unconscious and unites them" (C.G. Jung V6 - §466).

As with everything in Jungian Psychology, this is a dialectical procedure between the conscious and unconscious, in which, we allow what once has been demonized by our conscious judgments to become part of our personalities again. In that sense, Von Franz explains that the inner gold is frequently symbolized as something useless, unimportant, and sometimes even feces. Technically speaking, we're referring to holding the paradox between Eros and Logos, Introversion and Extroversion, and the four functions: *thinking, feeling, sensation, and intuition*, and also dealing with the *inferior function*, represented by the *animus* and *anima*. However, everyone has their “personal Nazareth” from which we believe nothing good can come.

We know the *conscious attitude* has the tendency to be unilateral to develop further, which makes it inevitable to exclude important elements of our personality and experiences that can enrich our lives. In that sense, for the symbol to emerge, part of our *conscious attitude* has to be sacrificed to allow these unconscious elements to be embodied. “Oh, but you don’t know my *shadow* it’s too dark!”. I get it, I’ve been there, and I’ve done that... The first encounter with the *shadow* tends to be horrifying, it feels like we “touched evil”. However, it’s daunting precisely because it announces the death of our current personality.

This is the moment we realize we must change and that everything we know about ourselves has to be questioned. This produces uncertainty and fear of the unknown, as people have the tendency to remain in a known bad situation rather than open themselves to new possibilities, even though it might free them since it provides an illusory sense of control. Furthermore, we have to remember that we’re still judging our *shadow* based on the conscious values that created it, that’s why we must strengthen our ego-complex and commit to a gradual change, and over time, once these contents become conscious, they’re transformed.

For instance, overwhelming anger can be turned into the ability to say no, place healthy boundaries, and be an important fuel to achieve our goals. But for it to happen, we have to cultivate an open attitude toward the unconscious and start seeing these parts differently, also knowing that truth lies somewhere between the unconscious perspective and our conscious judgments. By navigating the paradoxes of life, a new truth starts emerging, one that’s capable of uniting the opposites into a higher unit, Jung calls that the *transcendent function* that “[...] Arises from the union of conscious and unconscious contents”. [...] It is called “transcendent” because it makes the

transition from one attitude to another organically possible, without loss of the unconscious” (C.G. Jung - V8 - §145).

As we’ve seen, a strong ego is capable of holding and entertaining opposing and complementary truths at the same time. This attitude toward the unconscious is what allows us to be guided by the *Self* and eventually achieve a sense of completeness. But again, the *Self* only inspires us to follow a certain direction but it’s up to us to accommodate it in our daily lives. The individuation journey is about living the truth of our souls in our creative endeavors, in our professional pursuits, and in the relationships that enrich our lives. Individuation is about living our *pistis*, unraveling our *personal myths*, and creating our unique sense of meaning. In Joseph Campbell’s words, “The privilege of a lifetime is being who you truly are”.

.

12 - How To Read Carl Jung's Collected Works

In this final chapter, I'd like to leave you a few extra keys that will help you understand how Carl Jung structured his psychology around striving to conciliate the paradoxical nature of the *psyche*. Jung follows a few precepts he calls *antinomies*, which can also be understood as paradoxes. Once again, I'd like to mention the works of Heráclito Pinheiro who introduced me to this line of thought and guides, to which I made sight changes.

12.1 - Antinomies

The Practice of Psychotherapy is the only book in which Carl Jung reveals concisely how he thinks about his psychology and his psychotherapeutic method. Jung states that “The psyche is infinitely more complicated than light; hence a great number of antinomies is required to describe the nature of the psyche satisfactorily” (C. G. Jung - V16 - §1). In this light, there are four major precepts Carl Jung follows:

1 - “Psyche depends on body and body depends on psyche”.

This first antinomy refers to the conflict between *psyche* and matter. In psychology, this debate revolves mainly around the physicalist perspective, i.e., if the *psyche* is a mere epiphenomenon of the brain. If that's the case, the *psyche* would be considered a mere fruit of brain activity and it would be possible to influence it exclusively through physiological interventions. Taking this view to an extreme, we would be able to solve every psychological problem with surgeries and medication.

We have to remember that Carl Jung was a doctor and was obviously aware of the influence of the body over the *psyche*, but his findings dictate that the opposite is also true, the *psyche* can also influence the body*. However, we can't isolate either one of them, as both are interdependent, that's why it's a paradox. Furthermore, Carl Jung was interested in creating a psychology capable of holding these opposing and complementary truths, intending to create a new way of studying the *psyche* that's different from the materialistic standpoint, giving the *psyche* its own dignity.

2 - “The individual signifies nothing in comparison with the universal, and the universal signifies nothing in comparison with the individual”.

This second antinomy refers to the paradox between the individual and the collective truth. Every time we try to create a formula and something that's generally valid, we're disregarding individuality. This creates a major problem since we need generally valid truths to live in society, to share knowledge, and to have replicability. However, it's impossible to encompass everyone and every individual perspective. Carl Jung was aware that he needed to create a psychology that was capable of being generally valid, but at the same time, it had to respect individuality. That's precisely why, as we've seen in the first chapter, he never created a theory, but a map to navigate the *psyche*.

3 - “A psychological statement is only true if its opposite can be asserted”.

This antinomy makes a direct reference to the paradoxical nature of the *psyche*, as truth is dependent on the perspective you adopt. For instance, as we've discussed in the *psychological types* chapter, every statement that we make about extroverts works in the exact opposite manner for introverts, and vice-versa. When interpreting dreams, we can always interpret in a positive or negative light, the right interpretation is dependent on the individual's *conscious attitude*. Lastly, a strong ego-complex is one capable of holding opposing and complementary truths, which is the premise for the *individuation process*.

4 - “In psychotherapy there are no rules”.

In this last antinomy, Carl Jung is explaining once again his attitude toward theories. But since this statement also needs to follow his own precept, psychotherapy does have rules and at the same time, it doesn't. We certainly need knowledge of common and recurring patterns and they're extremely relevant to share and expand psychological knowledge, however, we always have to understand how this is being expressed in a single individual. Carl Jung even states that he needs to be ready to produce a new and unique understanding to every patient he meets, knowing very well, that he'll also find many commonalities and patterns..

12.2 - Introductory Reading Guide

With these last four keys, I believe I provided you with a solid foundation for you to continue your journey into Jungian Psychology. That said, one question I get all the time is: "In what order should I read the *collected works*"?

Say less, I got you! If I had to do it all over again that's exactly what I'd follow:

1 – “Man and His Symbols”.

I suggest reading only chapters 1 (Jung's chapter) and 3 (Von Franz's). Jung wrote this book after a dream that propelled him to create something for the layman to get acquainted with his ideas, making this a perfect introduction.

2 - Volume 16 – “The Practice of Psychotherapy” – Part I.

This is the only book where Carl Jung gives a detailed explanation of his methods and the foundations of his thinking. Furthermore, he gives a clear explanation of the development of personality, his views on psychotherapy, and the importance of the dialectic method. Just an amazing book overall.

3 – Volume 10 – “Civilization in Transition” – Chapter 4 – “The Undiscovered Self (Present and Future)”.

In this chapter, Jung explores his views on self-knowledge. He criticizes the statistical and scientific method since they can't grasp the individual. It's important to highlight that Jung never abandoned the scientific method since he always strived to conciliate individual and general psychology. With these last two books, you can better understand what framework Carl Jung follows and have the right lenses to comprehend his work.

4 – Volume 17 – “Development of Personality” – Chapter 7 also entitled “The Development of Personality”.

This is one of my favorite chapters of all time and I feel inspired every time I read it. It's important to say that “development of personality” and “*individuation process*” are synonyms, and in this book, Jung explores in-depth what this truly means and what it entails. He goes over 3 components: Necessity, Pistis, and Vocation.

5 – Volume 9 – “Aion” – The First 4 Chapters – “The Ego, The Shadow, The Syzygy, and The Self”.

This book is so hard to understand that the editors asked Jung to prepare an introduction about his main concepts. This is the only time you'll see him writing about his ideas in individual chapters.

6 – Volume 18 – “Symbolic Life” – Chapter 12 – “A reply to Martin Buber”.

This is an essential read to clearly understand Jung's position on religion and metaphysics. Spoiler alert: If you believe he was gnostic or a mad wizard you'll be disappointed.

7 – Volume 7 – “Two Essays On Analytical Psychology”.

Now that you have a good background it's time to read the whole of Volume 7. Every bit of Jung's ideas are in this volume, making this one of his most important works.

8 – Volume 18 – “Symbolic Life”- Chapter I – “*The Tavistock Lectures*”.

Here's where Jung introduces his typological method, the backbone of Jungian Psychology. It also has an introductory feel to it and it's great to read this instead of jumping right into *The Psychological Types*. Also, you'll be able to see Jung talking about his concepts in a different light.

9 – Volume 9.1 – “Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious” – Chapter – “The Psychology of The Child Archetype”.

Lastly, this chapter will give you a better understanding of the concept of *archetypes* and their applications.

10 – Volume 6 – “The Psychological Types”- Chapter V – “The Type Problem In Poetry”.

In this chapter, Jung introduces his most important idea and the goal of his entire work: The *symbol formation process*. He explores the redeeming journey our soul must endure in order to unite the opposites within, unraveling the *Self*.

11 – Bonus 1 – “Animus and Anima” – by Emma Jung.

Emma Jung was Carl Jung’s wife, so I guess there’s no one better to teach us about the *animus* and *anima*. Her writing style is clear and concise, a pleasant reading overall

12 – Bonus 2 – “Inner Work” – by Robert Johnson.

Robert Johnson did a great job synthesizing Carl Jung's method of dream analysis and active imagination. You can tell he is very familiar with Jung's works. Plus, he provides many practical examples and interesting tips and uses accessible language. I believe this is a great introduction, especially if you don't feel overwhelmed by Jung's collected works.

12 – Pro Tip – Volume 6 – “The Psychological Types” – Chapter XI – Definitions.

In the final part of this volume, Jung left us a kind of “dictionary”. Whenever you’re feeling lost and can’t understand what the heck he’s talking about, you can check the terms and concepts there.

PS: I can already see a few people rolling their eyes saying this is too much and asking me what would be absolutely essential to read. Assuming you read the entirety of PISTIS, you can read the first part of Volume 16, *The Travistock Lectures*, and the whole volume 7. There you go.

12.3 - Intermediate Reading Guide

I could've stopped at the beginner's guide, but I know there's a few insatiable souls like me reading this right now, so I'll also share with you an intermediate reading guide. The following books are crucial to acquire a solid foundation in Jungian Psychology:

1 – Volume 6 – “The Psychological Types”.

Volume 6 explores the backbone of Jungian Psychology, namely the *psychological types*. This knowledge is crucial to understanding everything about *psychodynamics*, *individuation*, and his most advanced works, such as alchemy. Pay especial attention to chapter V, where Jung explores the *symbol formation process*.

2 – "Psychotherapy" - Marie Von Franz.

Marie Von Franz is the righteous heiress of Jungian Psychology and this is one of her masterpieces. Moreover, understanding Jung becomes a lot easier when you see it through her eyes.

3 – Volume 8 – “Structures and Dynamics of The Psyche”.

This book is an important foundation for understanding Carl Jung's epistemology and important ideas such as *complexes* and *archetypes*, dream analysis, the notion of *psychic reality*, and *psychic energy* and *synchronicity*.

4 – Volume 5 – “Symbols of Transformation”.

This one is mind-blowing since Jung explores his most valuable idea, the *symbol formation*. In other words, he dissects the process of transformation our personality must endure in the different periods of our lives. This book is a map to understand the works of the inner center - The *Self*. For a complete picture, this book must be paired with Chapter V - "The Type Problem in Poetry" - from Volume 6, and the first chapter of Volume 8 - “On Psychic Energy”.

5 - “Alchemy - An introduction to the Symbolism and the Psychology” - Marie Von Franz

Finally, this book demystifies the relationship between psychology and alchemy and why it was relevant for Carl Jung structuring his ideas. There was no one better to give this introduction since Marie Von Franz was the one who translated most of the pieces Carl Jung used for his books. Moreover, Von Franz was the one who finished *Mysterium Coniunctionis*. After this book, you'll be ready to attack Carl Jung's most advanced works.

13 - The Hidden Message of Carl Jung's Red Book (Bonus Chapter)

I'd like to open with Friedrich Nietzsche's words, "God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him". This is a very profound statement because Nietzsche isn't referring solely to the Christian god, it's something much deeper. For centuries religion gave men a sense of meaning and purpose, but recently it was debunked by the new god of science. Consequently, old myths, symbols, and metaphors are dying in the hearts of men, and there's nothing else to ignite the quest for a deeper sense of meaning. Moreover, the positivistic paradigm, paired with an excessive rationalistic attitude, suffocates the *soul* and puts us at the mercy of the devouring vacuum of nihilism and the dark facet of the unconscious.

Before that, Carl Jung wrote, "The main interest of my work is not concerned with the treatment of neuroses but rather with the approach to the numinous. But the fact is that the approach to the numinous is the real therapy and inasmuch as you attain to the numinous experiences, you are released from the curse of pathology. Even the very disease takes on a numinous character. This citation says everything of essential importance about a Jungian analysis. If it is not possible to establish a relationship with the numinous, no cure is possible; the most one can hope for is an improvement in social adjustment" (M.L. Von Franz – Psychotherapy – p. 143).

In that sense, Carl Jung explains that a religious system provides a framework for the conscious mind to be protected from the unconscious and also intelligibly elaborate our numinous experiences. However, it's something ready-made, for some people, it still works as a living symbol, but to many, like myself, religion has lost its salvific value, and therefore its meaning. That's precisely why Jungian Psychology is so valuable, as its ultimate goal is to unravel one's *personal myth* and become capable of building our *cosmovision*. In other words, craft our own values and create our unique sense of meaning.

Let's remember that when Jung uses the term "god" or the *numinosum*, he's not referring to a really existent metaphysical being, but to the *psychic image* of what constitutes the greatest amount of libido, *the highest value operative in a human soul*, the *imago Dei*. Someone's god is what structures their whole *psyche* and consequently, their whole lives. As Jung says, "There are men "whose God is the belly" (Phil. 3 : 19), and others for whom God is money, science, power, sex, etc." (C. G. Jung – V6 – §67).

However, when we don't actively and consciously engage with the *numinous* and strive to find and create our own meaning, we'll unconsciously operate with a system that wasn't crafted by us, or worse, we'll be tormented by substitute gods. Now, the numinous infiltrates the conscious mind with sexual fantasies, greed for money, political fanaticism, and the craving for power or drugs. Ultimately, anything inescapable can be called God, "Man is free to decide whether "God" shall be a "spirit" or a natural phenomenon like the craving of a morphine addict, and hence whether "God" shall act as a beneficent or a destructive force" (C.G. Jung – V11 – §142).

Metaphorically speaking, we're constantly giving our blood as the ultimate sacrifice to keep our lies and addictions alive. We pay with our lives. Nowadays, narcissism also became a mighty substitute god that plots the destiny of many individuals who worship their traumas and take part in victimhood movements. When nothing can bring meaning, recreating your suffering brings an illusory sense of control, as you get to exempt yourself from any responsibility and get a rise from undermining everyone with a vicious tyranny.

In this light, Jung says that healing is a "religious problem", not because he's trying to create a new religion, but because only the creative force of the *numinosum* can revitalize our *souls* and help us find meaning. Von Franz says "The unconscious is "religious"—that is, it is the matrix of all primal religious experience—but it is often not "orthodox" (M.L. Von Franz – Psychotherapy – p. 148). This means that the unconscious isn't interested in destroying every religious symbol, but in creatively renewing them in the individual. Sometimes, it'll revitalize old traditions, and other times transform and update them, like raising the feminine and giving *Eros* its righteous place in the hearts and lives of men. This endeavor of creating a new meaning is a dialectical procedure, a co-creation between the conscious ego and the deeper layer of our *psyche*, the *Self*, which Jung denominates the *symbol formation process*.

The Unifying Symbol

In *Two Essays in Analytical Psychology*, Jung simply explains neurosis as self-division. There are two tendencies standing in strict opposition with one another, one of which is unconscious, therefore, our task is to harmonize the cultural and moral perspective of the conscious mind with the seemingly immoral nature of the unconscious. I specifically said "seemingly" because we already know that what causes self-division is our rigid moral attitude toward the

unconscious which strives to deny it. This naturally generates a backlash from the unconscious which creates conflicts to be seen and to be heard.

The *Self* contains both disintegrating and synthesizing tendencies at the same time, “Ultimately all conflicts are created not only by, let us say, a wrong conscious attitude, but by the unconscious itself, in order to reunite the opposites on a higher level” (M.L. Von Franz – Alchemical Active Imagination – p. 90). In that sense, neurosis also bears a redeeming quality, as the chance of overcoming a complex is being offered.

What’s capable of producing this new synthesis and bringing wholeness to the personality is the *unifying symbol*. In Jung’s words, “To be effective, a symbol must be by its very nature unassailable. It must be the best possible expression of the prevailing world-view, an unsurpassed container of meaning; it must also be sufficiently remote from comprehension to resist all attempts of the critical intellect to break it down; and finally, its aesthetic form must appeal so convincingly to our feelings that no argument can be raised against it on that score” (C.G. Jung – V11 – §142).

In other words, you’re not going to access this state intellectually, this is not a riddle to be solved. It’ll only happen by opening your heart to your inner truth and by allowing the depths of your being to come alive. The *symbol* is a profound experience that can reshape our whole lives and is accessible to everyone, however, most people either close themselves to their inner truth or don’t take it seriously.

The first group does everything they can to avoid looking within, after all, the unconscious is just “child play”. The second, try to possess the unconscious also childishly by “doing rituals”, taking copious amounts of drugs, and trying to develop “magical powers”. Of course, the unconscious always has its revenge, psychosis being the most poignant one. In this case, part of the ego is assimilated by the unconscious, “Through this, however, there then readily develops a covertly arrogant, mysteriously concocted pseudosuperiority and false “knowledge” concerning the unconscious.

This knowledge is based on the possession, that is, based on the impersonal “knowledge” of the unconscious, on its vague luminosity. As Jung proved, the unconscious does possess a certain

diffuse quality of consciousness, and in the case of possession by an unconscious complex, this naturally becomes partially available to the ego. This does indeed bring about a certain clairvoyance, but only at the expense of a clear delimitation of the field of consciousness or a deficient clarity of feeling” (M.L. Von Franz – Psychotherapy – p. 168).

These experiences give an illusion that you’re accomplishing something grandiose, however, it’s just inflation speaking, as the most important element is missing, ethical and moral confrontation. In other words, how do you bring these experiences to real life and for that, you need a strong and healthy ego rooted in the practical aspects of life. Most people only entertain the unconscious intellectually and aesthetically, they get enamored with the images but never ask themselves how this must change their lives and personalities. They can experience profound dreams and even experiment with active imagination, but it’s never embodied and it never becomes true knowledge as it lacks experience.

Uncover Your Personal Myth

Every time you seek the *numinosum* your responsibility increases. Here, I can give you a personal example, I had many active imagination sessions where a sword was presented to me and I had to wield it. The sword is a symbol for the Logos, the verb, the word. I had touched on a creative aspect of my personality and had to understand where it was taking me. I understood I was being demanded to make space in my life to write, not only that, to face my fears and present it to other people, even though I have never written anything in my life. This made me rearrange my whole life, both personal and professional.

This is how my book *PISTIS* came to be, your *personal myth* arises from engaging with the unconscious and giving it shape in your real and practical life. This takes me to my last point, individuation happens by sustaining the paradox between the external and the internal worlds. Therefore, a certain degree of adaptation is needed to bear the numinous in your life, otherwise, you’ll easily get engulfed by the unconscious. When you’re being guided by your PISTIS (inner law), fulfilling your professional and relationship duties also acquires a numinous quality, as your life becomes sacred and the container for the unconscious truth.

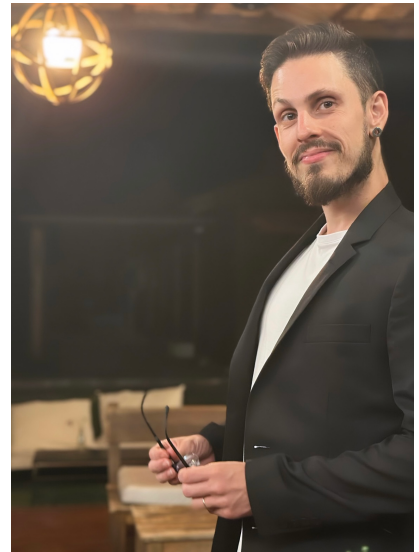
That's what the Red Book is all about, it was Jung's experiment to reconnect with his own *soul* and unravel his *personal myth*, an endeavor he denominated the *symbol formation process*. However, instead of being inspired by Jung's journey to embark on their own, many people fetishize the Red Book and try to possess Jung's experiences and make them their own.

I imagine that's how Carl Jung would address these people, "The disciple is unworthy; modestly he sits at the Master's feet and guards against having ideas of his own. Mental laziness becomes a virtue; one can at least bask in the sun of a semi-divine being. He can enjoy the archaism and infantilism of his unconscious fantasies without loss to himself, for all responsibility is laid at the Master's door" (C. G. Jung – V7.2 – §263). Others take a different approach and become prophets of a new religion, however, "Only a person who doubts himself feels compelled to win over as many admirers as possible so as to drown out his own doubt" (M. L. Von Franz – Psychotherapy – p. 151).

Following your *pistis* demands the utmost degree of responsibility and by adopting this attitude, you're finally free to carve your own path. This doesn't mean to vanish from society but to express your wholeness and individuality while paying your tribute to the world. Because when you touch the deepest part of yourself, you're also touching the archetypal foundation that can bring us all together. Lastly, The Red Book is a bet on the human soul and the creative aspect of the unconscious, we can certainly be inspired by others, however, we must follow our hearts. Always remember to sustain the paradox, "Life and spirit are two powers or necessities between which man is placed. Spirit gives meaning to his life, and the possibility of its greatest development. But life is essential to spirit, since its truth is nothing if it cannot live" (C.G. Jung – V8 – §648).

About The Author and Resources

It's Rafael Krüger here and I'm excited to share this work with you. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did writing it since this is one of the most audacious things I set myself to do. I've been working as a therapist since 2017 and so far I've been able to help people from over twenty countries. I can't tell you how inconceivable this was a few years ago, but that's what makes my heart beat faster, striving to surpass my own limitations and helping people break their own. I like to call that *living an audacious life*.



- You can learn more about me and my work on my website - www.rafaelkruger.com
- Order a paperback or kindle copy [here](#).

Resources:

- [Katabasis - The Shadow Integration Manual](#) - My best-selling and accessible course is perfect to complement this book and put everything into practice.
- [Audacity University](#) - Access to ALL of my courses. Master Jungian Psychology in 1 year and become your own analyst or integrate these tools into your professional practice.
- [Mentorship](#) - Catalyze your personal transformation with 1 on 1 sessions. A process uniquely tailored to your personality.